



BEST Plus 2.0 Test Usage Policy

BEST Plus 2.0 is an adult oral English proficiency interview developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), a nonprofit organization located in Washington, D.C. The aim of the BEST Plus 2.0 test usage policy is to delineate the purpose, intended audience, appropriate uses, reasonable accommodations, training requirements, and score interpretation of the current version of BEST Plus 2.0. If your proposed use of BEST Plus 2.0 does not comply with this test usage policy, you should contact the Adult ESL Assessment Team at CAL. You can also contact us to request information on the feasibility and cost of adapting BEST Plus 2.0 for specific purposes or audiences, interpreting BEST Plus 2.0 scores through a system other than those described here, or developing a test to meet your specific needs.

This test usage policy is intended to provide general guidance only. CAL reserves the right to modify and update this policy at any time.

Assessment Purpose and Intended Audience

BEST Plus 2.0 is an individually administered face -to -face adaptive oral proficiency interview designed to assess the English listening and speaking skills of adult nonnative speakers of English in the United States.

Appropriate Uses

BEST Plus 2.0 is appropriately used in the following ways:

- **With adults in the United States.** All BEST Plus 2.0 test items and graphics were developed for adult English language learners in the United States. BEST Plus 2.0 is not designed for and should not be used with learners outside of the United States or who are under the age of 16.
- **For educational purposes.** BEST Plus 2.0 is intended to be used in educational settings. BEST Plus 2.0 is designed to provide standardized assessment for placement decisions, instructional planning, and measuring the progress of adult English language learners enrolled in an instructional program in the United States. BEST Plus 2.0 can also provide supporting evidence of the effectiveness of an instructional program based on pretesting and posttesting results.
- **To measure speaking and listening skills.** BEST Plus 2.0 is intended to measure the speaking and listening skills of adult English language learners communicating about life skills content areas such as health, work, family, and recreation.
- **For interpreting learners' proficiency levels based on the National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Levels or the Learner Performance Levels (SPLs).** BEST Plus 2.0 is aligned with the NRS and SPL levels, BEST Plus 2.0 scores are not aligned with any other set of proficiency-level descriptors or other assessments. (See the Score Interpretations section of this policy.)

For information about assessing English language proficiency in contexts outside of education, please contact the Center for Applied Linguistics at aea@cal.org.

Reasonable Accommodations

Laws such as the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and other related federal, state, and local laws were enacted to guarantee equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, including those in educational programs. Programs administering BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Literacy are responsible for providing accessible services and for ensuring that requests for accommodations are considered and handled in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations. Program and test administrators may provide and allow accommodations in test administration procedures or in the testing environment for individuals with disabilities, provided that the accommodations do not compromise the purpose or results of the test.

The test administrator cannot show the prompts on the screen or in the test booklet to a person with a hearing impairment nor may a sign language interpreter be used. A permissible accommodation for BEST Plus 2.0 would be the use of hearing aids.

Likewise, a test administrator cannot explain the content of a picture cue prompt to a person with a visual impairment. An appropriate accommodation would be the use of a magnifying glass to enlarge the image. BEST Plus 2.0 is not appropriate for use with individuals whose visual impairment prevents them from seeing the picture cue prompts even when enlarged or otherwise enhanced. Skipping picture questions is not a reasonable accommodation for individuals with visual impairments.

Pretesting and Posttesting Guidance

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, NRS Guidelines, or funding 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.

In the event of external events such as noise (e.g., a fire alarm), power loss, or illness of the student or test administrator, the test should be stopped and the examinee's session rescheduled for another time. It is strongly advised, however, that programs limit their retesting of students to within the ascribed instructional hours in order to accurately measure gain, limit test exposure, and reduce testing fatigue in students.

For more detailed information about pre- and posttesting requirements, consult your program's or state's assessment policy. Note that for programs reporting to the NRS, posttesting cannot occur until after 12 hours of service. (See U.S. Department of Education, 2016, Chapter II.)

Initial Training Requirements and Scoring Recalibration

To ensure the accurate use and scoring of BEST Plus 2.0, all potential test administrators are required to attend a 6-hour workshop conducted by a certified BEST Plus 2.0 trainer and be approved by that trainer to begin administering BEST Plus 2.0. At the end of the training workshop, each newly approved test administrator signs an agreement to follow all BEST Plus 2.0 administration and scoring procedures exactly as explained in the *BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Guide*.

Please note: Only trainers who have been certified by the Center for Applied Linguistics are authorized to train individuals to become BEST Plus 2.0 test administrators.

The *BEST Plus Scoring Refresher Toolkit* is available to meet test administrators' ongoing need to maintain their scoring accuracy. Many factors can affect scoring accuracy, such as length of time between test administrations, lack of confidence in scoring accuracy, and other personal and program-related factors. BEST Plus 2.0 test administrators should thus periodically recalibrate, or realign, their scoring to the original rubric and benchmarks. To do this, test administrators are encouraged but not required by CAL to demonstrate their scoring accuracy by attending a refresher workshop, engaging in self-study, and completing a scoring activity from the BEST Plus 2.0 Scoring Refresher Toolkit. State assessment policies may include guidelines or requirements for test administrator recalibration. For more information, contact your state's adult education office.

Score Interpretation

BEST Plus 2.0 scores have been aligned with the Learner Performance Levels (SPLs) and the National Reporting System (NRS) ESL Educational Functioning Levels. Therefore, the NRS and SPL descriptors are the only ones that can be used to interpret BEST Plus 2.0 scores. (For more detailed information on score interpretation and NRS and SPL alignment, see the *BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Guide*, Section III-8 – III-19). BEST Plus 2.0 scores are not currently aligned with any other descriptors such as job functions, duties, or tasks, and should not be used for employment screening or other purposes that fall outside the purview of educational uses.

Questions: Email CAL at aea@cal.org.

Website: www.cal.org/aea

