



WIN Learning Assessments

WIN Learning Overview

Since its inception in 1996, WIN Learning has been the primary source of online, college and career readiness instruction including employable soft skills for numerous workforce area and statewide initiatives. In fact, more than half of the states in the United States have implemented WIN Learning's courseware and assessments in initiatives addressing the needs of education, workforce, and economic development, including K-12 school systems, colleges, adult education programs, workforce service centers, and teacher pre-certification.

More than 20 years of prevailing career readiness skills research consistently identifies mastery of core communication, reasoning, and problem-solving skills as required or highly recommended for most jobs across occupations and industries. The research further defines the standards for those core skills in terms of applied workplace math, workplace reading, and use of charts, graphs and similar workplace information. These are the standards that are basis for the proctored assessments proposed.

WIN Learning Implementation History

The WIN Career Readiness Assessments were created based on the WorkKeys Skill Metric, a precise numeric skill ranking system developed by ACT and used in its battery of work ready assessments. In this system, the skill levels build sequentially, each level incorporating the skills assessed at previous levels. ACT provided the designers of the WIN Career Readiness Courseware and WIN Career Readiness Assessments with the skill metric allowing them to essentially "reverse engineer" the courseware based on precisely defined learning objectives. As a result, the WIN Ready to Work Assessments and the WIN Career Readiness Courseware ensure concept mastery, not just test preparation.

The WIN Career Readiness Assessment and Career Readiness Courseware was first launched in Florida as Florida Ready to Work™ in 2007 in collaboration with a leader in the standards-based assessment development industry, as an innovative workforce education and economic development program. It has helped build a skilled workforce acting as a catalyst for retaining and creating high-wage jobs, attracting business investment, and growing Florida's economy. More than 400 private and public employers statewide are using the program to identify qualified new hires, reduce hiring and training costs, and build the skills of their workforce. The WIN Career Readiness Assessment is a national model based on Florida Ready to Work figures: 49,500+ Credentials earned, 151,500+ Courseware Hours Used, 202,700+ Learners/Jobseekers Enrolled, and 600+ Assessment Centers Registered.

Essential Soft Skills, or employability skills, go by a variety of names but national research shows there is a major need to provide jobseekers with intentional instruction and a credential to instill confidence in employers. Both are provided by WIN Learning with the WIN Soft Skills courseware and WIN Essential Soft Skills Assessment. The WIN Soft Skills courseware was based off the study "*Hiring, Retention and Training – Employers Perspectives on Trade and Soft Skills in South Carolina*", conducted by Dr. Richard Nagle of the University of South Carolina for the South Carolina Workforce Investment Board.

Career Readiness and Essential Soft Skills Assessments

The proctored assessments are based on a compilation of prevailing employer-focused research including, but not limited to, the U.S. Department of Labor *Survey of Necessary and Comprehensive Skills (SCANS)*; U.S. Department of Labor *Building Blocks Competency Model* (Tiers 1-3); U.S. Department of Education *Employability Skills Framework*; National Network of Business and Industry Associations *Common Employability Skills*; and Center for Literacy, Education & Employment, *Equipped for the Future* standards. (EFF) (website: <http://eff.clee.utk.edu/fundamentals/default.htm>). The assessments are criterion-referenced

against an absolute standard or “criterion” for performance. Thus, the assessments measure mastery of specific learning objectives rather than comparing an individual’s scores to the performance of other test takers.

The hard skills are Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information and Locating Information. The soft skills are listening actively, reading with understanding, solving problems and making decisions, cooperating with others, resolving conflict and negotiating, observing critically, and taking responsibility for learning.

Employers benefit from having employees earn credentials in important ways, such as in reducing turnover, improving productivity, and maximizing on-the-job training. With the credential, employees are more likely to work in teams to achieve mutual goals and objectives, demonstrate willingness to work, show initiative, and display responsible behaviors at work, including avoiding absenteeism and demonstrating promptness.

Ensuring Reliable and Valid Assessments

Test quality is measured in terms of reliability and validity. To ensure that the WIN Readiness Assessments achieve the quality necessary for use by local, state and national organizations, a detailed item-testing and analysis process was implemented. In the standards-referenced world, validity is determined by how well a test corresponds to standards/objectives. Reliability is the degree to which a test works in a predictable way. In principle, if you give a test to a particular learner twice, a perfectly reliable test would always produce the same score. Thus, a valid test must also have proven reliability. The details include the item numbering system, item mapping, and field testing process that enabled psychometrical analysis leading to parallel fixed-form assessments and, eventually, computer-adaptive assessments.