

Subject: Measurable Skills Gains Policy

Policy No: 2021-02

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Revised: N/A

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) documentation requirements specific to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Out-of-School Youth programs, and discretionary programs.

Background:

The MSG indicator is the percentage of participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training programs that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment.

Operational Procedure

The MSG indicator measures the interim progress of participants who are enrolled in education or training services for a specified reporting period. Therefore, it is not an exit-based measure. Instead, it is intended to capture important progressions through pathways that offer different services based on program purposes and participant needs. It also helps fulfill the vision for a workforce system that serves a diverse set of individuals with a range of services tailored to individual needs and goals.

A. Types of Measurable Skill Gains and Documenting Progress

Depending upon the type of education or training program in which a participant is enrolled, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

1. Documented achievement of at least one Educational Functioning Level (EFL) of a participant receiving instruction below the postsecondary level.

The Subrecipient shall measure EFL gain in one of three ways:

- Compare the participant's initial EFL, as measured by a pre-test, with the participant's EFL, as measured by a post-test. The approved pre-and post-tests must be based on the list of tests the Secretary of Education determines suitable for use in the National Reporting System for Adult Education. The list of approved assessments is published annually in the Federal Register;
- Adult high school programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent shall measure and report educational gain through the awarding of credits or Carnegie units; or
- Report an EFL gain for participants who exit a program below the postsecondary level and enroll in postsecondary education and training during the program year. A program below the postsecondary level applies to participants enrolled in a basic education program.

2. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

- The Subrecipient shall document in the Management Information System (MIS) attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent if the participant obtains certification of attaining passing scores on all parts of a State-recognized high school equivalency test, or the participant obtains a diploma or State-recognized equivalent documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies or an alternate diploma, including a high school or adult secondary school diploma.
- Secondary school diploma refers to a regular high school diploma, as defined in section 8101(43) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

3. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards.

- For secondary education, the subrecipient shall document this gain through receipt of a secondary transcript (Secondary transcript is specific to youth attending high school) or report card for one semester showing that the participant is achieving the State unit's policies for academic standards. For postsecondary education, this gain must demonstrate a sufficient number of credit hours—which is at least 12 hours per semester (or equivalent) or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 hours over the course of two completed semesters (or equivalent) during 12 months that shows a participant in achieving the State unit's academic standards (or the equivalent for other than credit hour programs). For example, if a postsecondary student completed 6 hours in the spring semester and six more hours in the fall semester and those semesters crossed two program years, they would not count as a skill gain in the first program year, but they would count as a skill gain in the second program year.

4. Satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones, such as completion of On-the-Job Training (OJT) or completion of one year of an apprenticeship

program or similar milestones from an employer or training provider providing training.

- Documentation for this gain shall vary, as the subrecipient identifies appropriate methodologies based upon the nature of services being provided, but progress reports must document substantive skill development that the participant has achieved. The subrecipient shall document the gain by a satisfactory or better progress report from an employer or training provider. Progress reports shall include training reports on milestones completed as the individual masters the required job skills or steps to complete an OJT or apprenticeship program. Increases in pay resulting from newly acquired skills or increased the performance also can be used to document progress.

NOTE: In the description of this type of MSG, "completion of one year of an apprenticeship" is just one example of a timeframe that shall be established for achieving a satisfactory or better progress report toward a specific milestone, and the "one-year" timeframe should not be construed as a required timeframe or the only way that a participant in an apprenticeship can achieve a Measurable Skill Gain.

5. Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.

- Documentation for this gain shall include passage of a component exam in a Registered Apprenticeship program, employer-required knowledge-based exam, satisfactory attainment of an element on an industry or occupational competency-based assessment, or other completion test necessary to obtain a credential.

Examples:

- A participant has enrolled in a 4-year registered apprenticeship program: the measurable skill gains indicator tracks the skills the participant gains throughout the reporting period, not just at the end of the 4-year training program.
- Low-skilled adult participants of an adult education program: the MSG indicator provides an opportunity to track and report gains in reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency.

B. Participants Included in the Measurable Skills Indicator

- All participants in a Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker-funded training program are included in the MSG indicator (which includes funding a training program for a secondary school program equivalent and all participants in work-based training).
- All Title I Out-of-School Youth program participants who are in one of the following are included in the indicator:
 - The program element occupational skills training;
 - Secondary education during participation;
 - Postsecondary education during participation;
 - Title II-funded adult education during participation;
 - The YouthBuild program during participation;
 - Job Corps during participation

If a participant achieves more than one type of measurable skill gain in a reporting period, the most recent gain is the skill gain type that should be recorded.

C. Participants Excluded from the Measurable Skills Indicator

Participants who exit for any of the reasons listed below are excluded from the MSG indicator.

- The participant exits the program because they have become incarcerated in a correctional institution or have become a resident of an institution or facility providing 24-hour support such as a hospital or treatment center while receiving services as a participant.
- The participant exits the program because of medical treatment and that treatment is

expected to last longer than 90 days and precludes entry into unsubsidized employment or continued participation in the program.

- The participant is deceased.
- The participant exits the program because the participant is a member of the National Guard or other reserve military unit of the armed forces and is called to active duty for at least 90 days.

YOUTH ONLY - The participant is in the foster care system as defined in 45 CFR 1355.20(a) and exits the program because the participant has moved from the local workforce as part of such a program or system.

D. Guidance for Recording/Reporting MSG in the State Management Information System (MIS)

- [Measurable Skills Gain \(MSG\) guidance - Documenting and recording progress](#)
- [MSG - Recording Measurable Skills Gain in ETO](#)
- [MSG - Running the Measurable Skills Gain report](#)

E. Additional Requirements

- Even though only one gain may be counted in the numerator per reporting period (i.e., program year), subrecipient should record ANY skill gain attained throughout the program year.
- Procedures should be in place to ensure staff are documenting participant's skills progressions.
- Subrecipient shall develop procedures suitable for the applicable academic system in use by the secondary or postsecondary institution in which the participant is enrolled including, but not limited to, semesters, trimesters, quarters, and clock hours for the calculation of credit hours (or their equivalent) when documenting progress towards MSG.

F. References

- [Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV Core Programs \(doleta.gov\)](#)