



# Wisconsin Joint WIOA Measurable Skill Gain Detailed Guidance

---

## What is the Measurable Skills Gain?

The measurable skills gain (MSG) is a new indicator required by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) designed to measure in-progress skills gains made by program participants in education or training during a program year.

## Definition

The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skills gains, defined as documented academic technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following methods:

### Method #1: Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Gain

- Method 1a: EFL Gain via Pre-Test/Post-Test in PY (e.g. TABE, BEST Plus)
- Method 1b: EFL gain by entry into Post-Secondary Education

### Method #2: Attainment of a Secondary School Diploma

- Tracked by Title I, II, and IV under credential attainment.
- Only for those **without** a high school diploma or equivalent at program entry.

### Method #3: Transcript/Report Card Meeting State's Unit Policy

- Secondary Education: Pass all classes in one semester within the program year.
- Post-Secondary Education:
  - Full-time students – earn 12 credits in one semester
  - Part-time students – earn 12 credits over the course of two consecutive semesters
- **Note:** All participants in education may make this gain. Transcripts/report cards must not indicate that the participant dropped out of school, was removed from the institution, or otherwise indicate removal on academic or conduct grounds.

### Method #4: Progress Report from Employer or Training Provider

- Progress report from the entity providing the training.
- Examples include on-the-job training (OJT) and apprenticeship

**Method #5: Skills Progression via Exam**

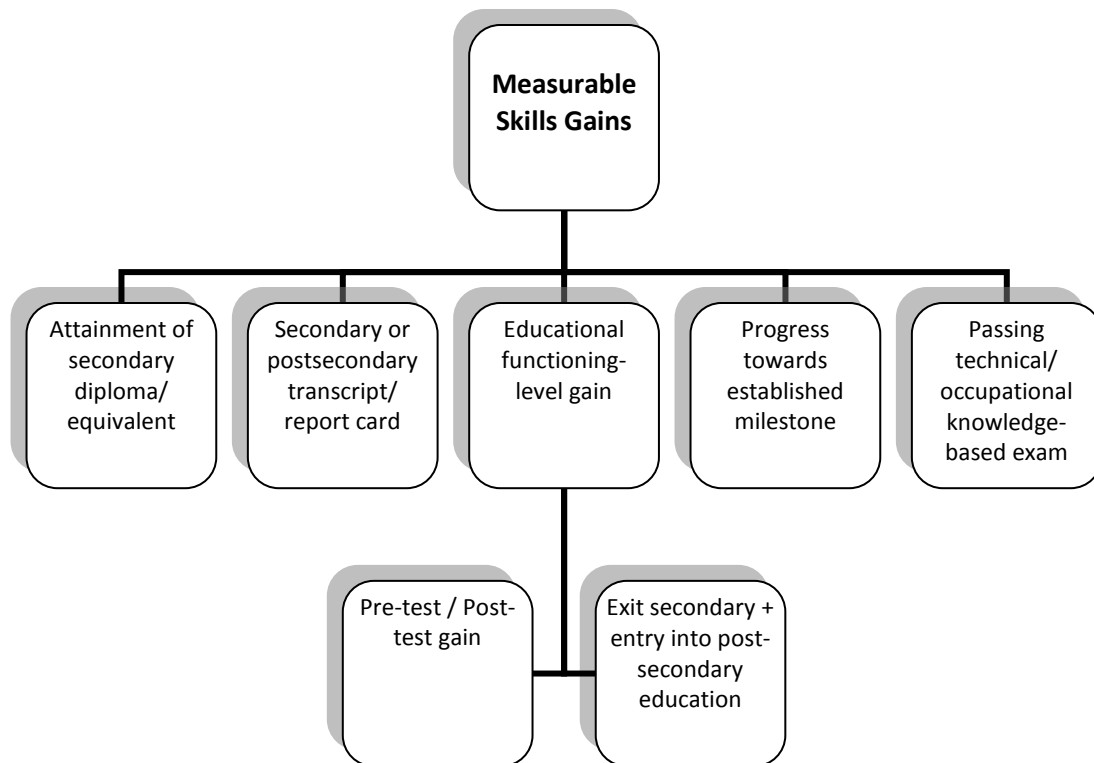
- Passage of an exam required for a particular occupation or an exam showing progress attaining technical/occupational skills as by trade related benchmarks.
- Tests administered as a part of a typical secondary or post-secondary education course do not count, as the test is not required for a particular occupation (e.g. CDL, Welding Certification Exam).

See examples of exams at the DSPS website:

<http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/Education-Exams>

**Big Picture Things to Remember**

It is recognized that not every participant in education or training will qualify to make a gain based on report timing. The system must strive to meet the needs of the participants first. During PY2016 and PY2017, measurable skills gains (MSGs) must be reported, but is not a negotiated indicator of performance for WIOA Title I and Title IV. Title III and Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) are excluded from this measure. The Departments of Labor and Education have identified PY2016 and PY2017 as "baseline" years for the MSG for Title I and Title IV because comparative data did not exist under WIA. Baseline years allow partners to determine reasonable performance for this indicator.



### Operational Notes

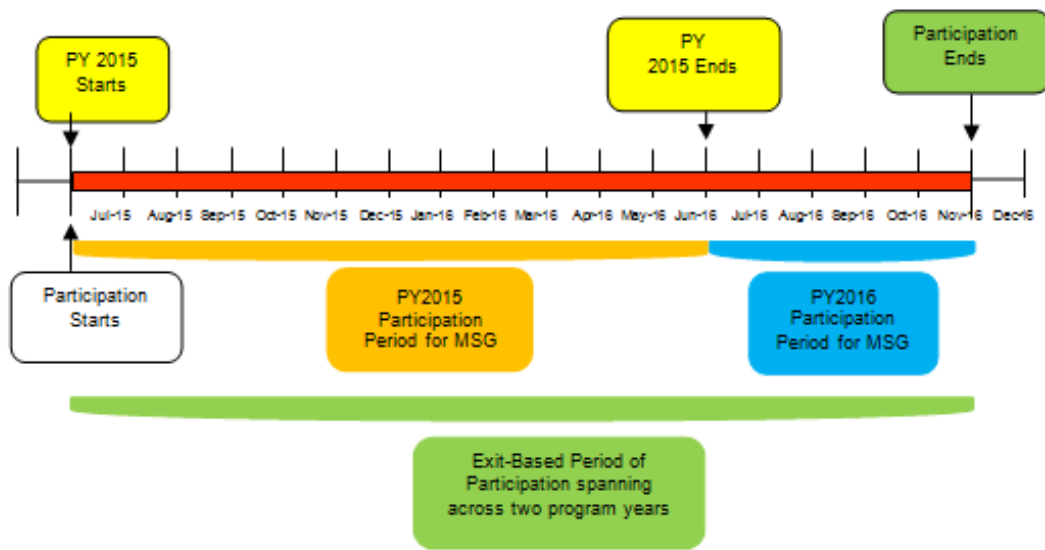
We must report whether a measurable skill gain (MSG) is made during any program year where training or education is one day or greater in length.

- Program year is the reporting period. A program year (PY) begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.
- An in-progress measure, this indicator examines active participants in training/education.
- MSG indicator includes all participants who were in education or training during the PY.
  - Regardless **if** the training/education was completed or not.
  - Regardless of **when** the participant begins the training/education.
- The indicator also examines participants that exited in the same year with at least one day of training/education.
- Exit exclusions only apply to the year the participant exited.
- You may retroactively enter MSG documentation back to 7/1/2016.
- DOL employment training programs in Wisconsin's common exit share MSG outcome results.

All MSG gains should be reported, and the most recent MSG in the PY during each period of participation will be counted.

In the example below, the individual becomes a participant in June 2015 and exits the program in November 2016.

#### Counting Periods of Participation: Example for Exit-Based Indicators and the Measurable Skill Gains Indicator of Performance





As demonstrated in the example, the participant has one period of participation for the purpose of exit-based indicators which spans two program years (PY2015 and PY2016), and two periods of participation for the purpose of the measurable skill gains indicator. The participant is counted as a participant in both PY2015 and PY2016 because the individual continued to receive services after July 1, 2016. Exit-based performance indicators should be collected and calculated based on the November 2016 exit date. However, for the measurable skill gains performance indicator calculation, the participant is counted for one reporting period in PY2015 and a different reporting period in PY2016.

## Who is Included in MSG Calculations?

### Title 1

- Adult/Dislocated Work and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
  - Participants who receive any training service, regardless of fund source related to the IEP, or are co-enrolled in a partner program training service.
  - **Reporting Note:** All training/education related to the IEP must entered into Automated System Support for Employment Training (ASSET).
- Youth Program
  - Training Type: Occupational Skills Training
  - Education Type: Secondary Education, Post-Secondary Education, Adult Basic Education, Job Corps, or YouthBuild.
  - **Note:** Education from any fund source triggers entry into the Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gain Rate regardless of fund source.

### Title II

- Numerator: Participants included in the denominator that attained a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, an EFL gain (measured by pre-post testing or part), completed Carnegie Units towards secondary credential or who entered postsecondary education after exiting the program.
- Denominator: Participants 18 years of age or older enrolled in an Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program that have completed at least 12 contact hours of service.

**Title III** - Measurable skills gain (MSG) rate does not apply.

### Title IV

- Numerator: Participants included in the denominator that achieved one of the five MSG types.
- Denominator: Participants enrolled in an educational or training program that leads to a recognized credential or employment as identified on the IPE.
- **Note:** See [DVR Measurable Skills Gains Guidance](#) for program-specific details.



## Who is Excluded from MSG Calculations?

### Exclusions that Apply to Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker and Titles II, III, and IV:

- Participants not enrolled in education or training leading to a recognized credential or employment.
- Participant exits the program because he or she has become incarcerated in a correctional institution or has become a resident of an institution or facility providing 24-hour support such as a hospital or treatment center during the course of receiving services as a participant.
- 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.
- Participant is deceased.
- 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.
- The participant, who was determined to be eligible for program services, is later determined not to have met the program's eligibility criteria.
  - This exclusion applies only to the VR program, in which participant eligibility is routinely revisited during the participation period.
  - For example, in the VR program, an individual may be presumptively eligible in accordance with program regulations and later the individual is found to be too severely disabled to benefit from VR services.
  - As another example, a participant may decide, after receiving some services, to pursue sheltered employment. Because an individual must pursue an employment outcome, and sheltered employment does not meet the definition of an employment outcome for purposes of the VR program, this individual would be determined to be no longer eligible for the VR program.
  - For titles I, II, and III, program eligibility is determined at the time an individual becomes a participant and such eligibility is not revisited during the individual's program participation.

### Exclusions that Apply to the Title I Youth Program:

- The participant exits the program because he or she has become incarcerated in a correctional institution or has become a resident of an institution or facility providing 24-hour support such as a hospital or treatment center during the course of 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.
- 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 area as part of such a program or system.

### Exclusions that Apply to the Title II AEFLA Program

- A Title II AEFLA participant, who is a criminal offender in a correctional institution, receives services under sec. 225 of WIOA. When these participants remain incarcerated after exit from the program, they are excluded from the calculation of the following WIOA indicators of performance:
  - Employment rate: 2nd quarter after exit;
  - Employment rate: 4th quarter after exit;
  - Median earnings: 2nd quarter after exit; and
  - Credential attainment.
- All sec. 225 participants are included in the measurable skills gain (MSG) indicator.

### Measurable Skills Gain Method Details

#### Method #1: Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Gain

This method applies to Title I, Title II, Title IV, and TAA. It is the documented achievement of at least one EFL of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary level. Of the three sub-methods, only two apply to Wisconsin:

- Method 1a: EFL Gain via Pre-Test/Post-Test (e.g. [TABE](#), BEST Plus)
  - Only National Reporting System-approved tests are authorized to demonstrate EFL Gains via pre-test/post-test.
  - For Title I: Pre-test may be administered up to six months prior to program participation.
  - Post-test must be administered on or before the participant's exit date **and** within the PY.
  - One full EFL gain is required.
- Method 1b: EFL Gain via Carnegie Credits (Does not apply in Wisconsin)
  - The Adult High School program in Wisconsin does not use Carnegie Credits, and is certified by the Department of Public Instruction.
  - Students will be treated as attending a secondary school under WIOA MSG.
- Method 1c: EFL Gain by Entry into Post-Secondary Education
  - If the participant was in the MSG indicator and is enrolled in post-secondary education after exit but still during the program year.

For more information on the tests of Adult Basic Education, visit: <https://sps.dwd.state.wi.us/wioa/WIOAPerformance/Adult%20Education%20Family%20Literacy%20Act/2016-29899.pdf>



### Method #2: Attainment of a Secondary School Diploma

- This method applies to Titles I, II, IV, and TAA.
- Gains can be made by participants who attain a secondary school diploma or its equivalent during the PY. The three acceptable diplomas in Wisconsin include:
  - High School Diploma
  - High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED)
  - General Education Development (GED)
- See the [Wisconsin Acceptable Credentials under WIOA](#) for a definition of Secondary Education diplomas and certificates.

### Method #3: Transcript/Report Card Meeting State's Unit Policy

- This method applies to Titles I, IV, and TAA.
- Gains may be made by any participant in education or training; however, this primarily applies to participants in traditional secondary and post-secondary education programs.
- Wisconsin's State Unit Policy for Academic Standards
  1. **Background:** §677.155 (a) (1) (v) outline the methods to make a measurable skills gain. Among the methods is a secondary or post-secondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hour that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards. TEGL 10-16 and TAC 17-1 Performance Accountability Guidance references an administrative unit in each state that provides authorization to post-secondary institutions and a State educational agency that establishes education standards for secondary education. Wisconsin has many post-secondary education authorities that govern various types of post-secondary institutions. No single state standard defines an individual's success. Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provides academic standards geared towards compliance by a secondary institution in the instruction of each subject area. DPI allows local school boards to determine academic grade, course pass or fail standards. Therefore, as the agency responsible for administering the WIOA Title I programs, Wisconsin DWD accepts passing report cards from secondary and post-secondary institutions based on the standards below.
  2. **Acceptable Documentation:** Any reasonable verification of a transcript or report card will meet the requirement for documentation such as an unofficial transcript, online report card or Blackboard printout/screenshot.
  3. **Secondary School Minimum Achievements**
    - a. The report card demonstrates satisfactory achievement in all classes by the participant in secondary education for **one** semester. The semester must be within the program year (PY).



- b. Satisfactory report cards include those with grades of D- or higher in traditional grading systems or "satisfactory" grade in non-traditional grading schemes.
- c. The report card must not indicate the participant dropped out of school, was removed from the institution or other conditions that indicate removal on academic/conduct grounds.

#### 4. **Post-Secondary School Minimum Achievements**

- a. Full-time students must achieve a minimum of 12 credits completed (in accordance with the institution's standards) within one semester. The MSG is achieved in the PY the semester ends.
- b. Part-time students must achieve a minimum of 12 credits completed (in accordance with the institution's standards) in two consecutive semesters within the same 12-month period. If the first semester begins in one PY and the second semester ends in the next PY, the MSG would be achieved in the PY that the second semester ends.
- c. The report card must not show that the participant dropped out of school, was removed from the institution, or any other condition that indicates removal on academic or conduct grounds.

#### 5. **ASSET Requirement**

- a. WIOA Title I providers must record the date of report card/transcript into the Automated System Support for Employment Training (ASSET) at the time it was issued for inclusion into the MSG numerator.
- b. A copy of the report card/transcript must be retained on file. See the WIOA Performance Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) for data entry instructions.

#### **Method #4: Training Milestone**

- Gains may be made by participants who were enrolled in job skills training.
- Joint Guidance: "**Satisfactory or better progress report, toward established milestones, such as completion of an OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training.** Documentation for this gain may vary, as programs should identify appropriate methodologies based upon the nature of services being provided, but progress reports must document substantive skill development that the participant has achieved. The gain may be documented by a satisfactory or better progress report from an employer or training provider. Progress reports may 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 performance also can be used to document progress."





Measurable Skills Gain Method #4 Checklist

- 1. Is it a progress report? Y or N
- 2. Has substantive skill development achieved by the participant been documented?
  - a. Individual mastery or improvement of job skills.
  - b. Steps to complete an OJT or apprenticeship program.
  - c. Increases in pay from acquired skills (Did the participant get a raise?).
  - d. Individual's performance is documented to be improved. Y or N
  - e. On a progress report with specific skill ratings, did at least one skill improve achieving satisfactory results? If multiple skills are on the progress report, identify any single skill that was improved.
  - f. Other documented substantive skill achievements

If all questions are answered Y, enter the date the progress report was issued. Retain a copy of the progress report in the participant file.

Method #5: Skills Progression via Exam

- Gains may be made by any participant in training/education.
- Joint Guidance: "**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 may include passage of a component exam in a Registered Apprenticeship program or 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."

Measurable Skills Gain Method #5 Checklist

- 1. Is it an objective test or assessment done by an evaluator on an evaluation, with pass/fail benchmarks? Y or N
- 2. Is the exam/test/assessment required for entry or advancement in a particular occupation? (If a person does not complete the exam, are they qualified/allowed to have the job?) Y or N  
OR  
 Is the exam/test/assessment required for completion of a credential?

If all questions are answered Y, enter the date the exam was passed. Retain a copy of the exam, score sheet, or letter indicating the exam was completed in the participant file.



## **Additional Questions**

We recognize the Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) Rate are new indicators with much to be discovered. Wisconsin created a Performance Advisory Committee to address developments in all WIOA performance indicators. If you have questions or situations that you would like to have addressed by the State's Performance Advisory Committee, please send an email to [WisPerforms@dwd.wi.gov](mailto:WisPerforms@dwd.wi.gov) and the group will review the scenario with all of the WIOA partners. Guidance on that specific situation will be issued to the requestor and posted to the [WIOA Performance SharePoint page](#) dedicated to the Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skills Gain Rate.