

The Teacher Leader Assessment Specialist (TLAS) program of study offered by the Michigan Assessment Consortium is the nation's first program leading to credentialed teacher leaders prepared to serve and be recognized as classroom assessment specialists (CAS) in their schools, districts, and state.

What is the TLAS program?

The TLAS program is a competency-based program of study focused on the advancement of assessment literacy. It is intended to strengthen the beliefs and knowledge of candidates as they move toward demonstration of [seven classroom assessment specialist \(CAS\) competencies](#). When fully implemented by teachers, the seven CAS competencies ensure that classrooms have a comprehensive assessment system that supports quality teaching and learning. ([See Graphic](#))

The program is supported by Michigan's [Teacher Leader Preparation Standards](#), which act as a framework in which TLAS candidates will explore and apply their learning.

What is a competency-based program?

A competency-based education (CBE) program allows candidates to advance through "courses" based on their ability to demonstrate proficiency on a competency through the completion of specific tasks and engagements. They are encouraged to progress at their own pace and in a sequence that best fits their context. This method is tailored to meet different learning styles and contexts and can lead to more efficient and meaningful student outcomes.

Why should I become an assessment specialist?

1. To improve your own assessment literacy and professional practice.

The need for assessment literate educators is necessary to foster excellence for all students. Assessment is often not recognized as a key to effective instruction and improved learning outcomes; however, it is essential to promote quality teaching and learning.

2. To earn recognition as a certified classroom assessment specialist (CAS) and support your colleagues.

The TLAS program was developed to enhance the assessment literacy and assessment performance of **at least** one educator in every school building, who would become the expert others may learn from to ensure best assessment practices are advanced across all classrooms. A teacher who is an acting certified classroom assessment specialist (CAS) would be highly regarded for their expertise and commitment to comprehensive, balanced assessment systems

"In education, the linchpin of the accountability system is our students' test performance. Astonishingly, however, when it comes to this key indicator of education quality, the vast majority of educators reside in blissful ignorance. Such assessment illiteracy is surely a prescription for professional suicide."

– Dylan Wiliam, 2004

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and would further the work of assessment literacy within their own district's classrooms and, eventually, in classrooms across Michigan.

3. To earn endorsement as a Teacher Leader and qualify for a [Michigan Advanced Professional License](#)

The TLAS enhancement, approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in May 2023, will be added to the teaching certificate of successful qualifying program completers and will result in the attainment of an Advanced Teacher Leader License.

4. To better contribute to the MAC Community

TLAS Completers will be poised to contribute their expertise and experience to the greater MAC Community as presenters, mentors, and exemplars.

5. To earn credit toward a master's degree at select colleges and universities

MAC is also partnering with Northern Michigan University and other select colleges and universities to apply the equivalent of 18 graduate credits toward a completers' advanced degree.

"About 80% of a student's assessment experience is determined by local educators....With that fact front and center, assessment literacy is more important than ever as teachers envision and plan for assessment systems that support rigorous standards, ambitious teaching, and higher levels of student learning."

—MAC, 2021

What is involved in becoming a classroom assessment specialist (CAS)?

An ideal candidate will advance through eight courses that will allow them to demonstrate, through job-embedded experiences, that they are proficient in the course competency and related indicators of success. Candidates will demonstrate their specific knowledge, skill, and ability through application within their own unique contexts.

Candidates will be assigned a MAC faculty member who will provide guidance and feedback along the journey to earning enhancement. They will also have opportunities to learn from other candidates and provide feedback on their shared learning.

Along the way, candidates will compile a portfolio of evidence to showcase their assessment literacy. Candidates will, at the end of each course, present their evidence through a "Presentation of Learning" to TLAS faculty who will use provided rubrics to determine proficiency.

At the completion of all eight courses, the candidate will culminate their learning experience through a Capstone Project.

It is anticipated that completion of the program will take up to 18 months.

Who should apply to become a classroom assessment specialist?

An ideal candidate for the TLAS Program is an educator with a strong interest in advancing the assessment literacy of themselves and their colleagues within a supportive educational setting. A

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candidate should have strongly held beliefs regarding the need for assessment literate educators and a knowledge and understanding of the assessment literate practices that have the greatest impact on student achievement. For further clarification see the [attached graphic](#).

How does an educator become part of the TLAS Program?

1. Self-assess how well you match the qualities of an [ideal TLAS candidate](#) ([see graphic](#))
2. Complete the TLAS Program Application (coming soon).
3. Complete the program self-reflection.
4. Meet with a TLAS Faculty Member

What happens after I'm accepted into the TLAS program of study?

1. Meet with TLAS Faculty Member to determine individualized program of study.
2. Engage in online, self-paced coursework that is primarily self-directed supplemented with several virtual and in-person convenings.
3. Compile evidence for each indicator to demonstrate competence.
4. Engage in a "Presentation of Learning" upon completion of **each course**
5. Present a Capstone Project upon completion of **all eight courses**.

Upon successful demonstration on all seven TLAS Program competencies, candidates graduate and earn a Teacher Leader Assessment Specialist credential.

Who supports the TLAS program?

The TLAS Program is developed by the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) and supported by both the MAC and Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

The MAC is a professional association of educators who believe quality education depends on accurate, balanced, and meaningful assessment. A nonpartisan and nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer board, the MAC provides leadership and services to advance high-quality balanced assessment practices and systems. **The Mission** of the MAC is to improve student learning and achievement through a system of coherent curriculum, balanced assessment, and effective instruction.

We do this *collaboratively* by:

- Promoting assessment **knowledge & practice**
- Providing **professional learning**
- Producing and sharing assessment **tools and resources**

MDE is the state education agency serving Michigan's approximately 1.5 million students in both public schools and public-school academies. We are pleased to partner with two MDE departments:

- *The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA)* which manages Michigan's innovative and comprehensive system of assessments and oversees Michigan's school accountability system, and
- *The Office of Educator Excellence (OEE)* that serves the community by providing whole-child centered resources to ensure that every student in the P-20 system has equitable access to a

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high-quality, barrier-free system of education professionals. This is accomplished by the recruitment, preparation, certification, development, support, retention, and recognition of educators through collaboration with internal and external partners.

How do I apply to be a TLAS candidate and what is the cost?

The TLAS program is **valued at \$12,000**, based on a study of comparable programs and graduate credit. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, with new candidates approved and starting every quarter. Applications will be considered following payment of a **\$75 application fee**.

**INDICATE YOUR INTEREST IN THE
TLAS PROGRAM OF STUDY**

Will funding be available to help support candidates cover the cost of this program?

Following the initial pilot, candidates' participation is expected to be offset by a combination of scholarships and district/organization support. MAC will work with MDE to provide guidance to candidates and their districts regarding appropriate local, state, and federal funding sources.

Limited time offer!

Beginning September 18, MAC will accept applications to fill a first cohort of six candidates who will pilot the program at **minimal cost**, with most tuition underwritten by the MAC for completers. Applicants are urged to submit their applications by **October 31, 2023**, and pilot candidates will be selected by November 15, 2023. This first pilot group of candidates will begin Winter 2024.

Who might I contact for more information?

Ellen Vorenkamp at evorenkamp@michiganassessmentconsortium.org

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate for the TLAS program will enter the program with a set of beliefs, knowledge, and aspirations concerning balanced assessment systems, specifically in a school and/or classroom setting. Beliefs and Knowledge should closely match the following:

Beliefs: expected in all candidates

- An effective assessment system must balance different purposes for different users and use varied methods of assessment (assessment *for* and assessment *of* learning) and communication tools.
- Good classroom assessment and quality instruction are intricately linked to each other.
- Assessment results should be used to make instructional decisions to improve student learning.
- Students can use instructionally sensitive assessment results to improve their learning.
- Students should be active partners in learning how to use assessment results to improve their learning.

Knowledge: Candidates are knowledgeable and/or are committed to further development in the following areas

- That a balanced assessment system respects that different users have different assessment purposes, and different assessment purposes may require different assessment methods.
- The various purposes addressed by student assessment: student improvement; instructional program improvement; student, teacher, or system accountability; program evaluation; and prediction of future performance/achievement.
- The definitions of and uses for different types of assessment: summative assessment; interim benchmark assessment; formative assessment practices; and criterion vs. norm-referenced assessment interpretations.
- How to develop or select high quality assessments, addressing key factors: purpose for assessing; standards or learning targets to be assessed; methods appropriate to learning targets and assessment purpose(s); test plan/blueprint that ensure confident conclusions about achievement; item selection/construction and scoring tools; field testing; bias and distortion prevention; and decisions to purchase or develop locally.
- How to translate standards into clear learning targets that are written in student-friendly language.
- Assessment accommodations that are available and when to use them with students with disabilities and English language learners.
- The different ways to report results: normative interpretations and criterion-referenced interpretations.
- How to provide effective feedback from assessments suitable for different audiences: descriptive versus evaluative.
- Sound grading and reporting practices.

Through completion of the TLAS program, a candidate will take the beliefs and knowledge they have and advance their understanding through the implementation of tasks and activities geared toward mastery of course competencies.

Candidate Profile

These competencies focus on outcomes and real-world performances in which an ideal graduate of the TLAS program will demonstrate proficiency for successful completion of the program.

Portrait of a TLAS Graduate

Upon completion of the TLAS Program, an ideal candidate will be able to demonstrate their mastery of **seven competencies of a classroom assessment specialist:**

Competency 1: Effectively design and implement sound assessment *for* and *of* learning opportunities for students, based on consistent interpretation and application of state standards.

Competency 2: Develop and use a classroom assessment plan that reflects a balanced approach to assessment.

Competency 3: Understand and effectively use the formative assessment process.

Competency 4: Know and understand the elements of quality assessments *of* learning. Be able to develop or select appropriate assessments *of* learning. Have the ability to interpret, communicate, and use results from these appropriately.

Competency 5: Create a classroom environment that uses classroom assessment-related practices to promote student involvement in the assessment process to enable reflective, self-directed learners.

Competency 6: Report meaningful evidence of student achievement to various stakeholders to certify the achievement level of the student.

Competency 7: Understand, explain, advocate for, and promote practices and policies that support quality classroom assessment and assessment systems.

TEACHER LEADER ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST (TLAS) CANDIDATE PROFILE & TARGET COMPETENCIES

IDEAL CANDIDATE...



BELIEVES:

- An effective assessment system must balance different purposes for different users and use varied methods of assessment (assessment for and assessment of learning) and communication tools.
- Good classroom assessment and quality instruction are linked to each other.
- Assessment results should be used to make instructional decisions to improve student learning.
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KNOWS: Candidates are knowledgeable and/or are committed to further development in the following areas

- A balanced assessment system respects that different users have different assessment purposes, and different assessment purposes may require different assessment methods.
- Student assessment addresses a variety of purposes. Student improvement; Instructional program improvement; Student, teacher, or system. accountability; Program evaluation; and Prediction of future performance/achievement.
- The definitions and uses for different types of assessment: summative assessment; interim benchmark assessment; formative assessment practices; and criterion vs. norm-referenced assessment interpretations.
- How to develop or select high quality assessments: determine the purpose for assessing; determine the standards or learning targets to be assessed; select the assessment methods appropriate to learning targets and assessment purpose(s); design a test plan or blueprint that will permit confident conclusions about achievement; select or construct the necessary assessment items and scoring tools where needed; field test the items in advance or review them before reporting the results; improve the assessment through review and analysis to eliminate bias and distortion; and, assessments can be purchased or developed locally; each approach has advantages and challenges.
- How to translate standards into clear learning targets that are written in student-friendly language.
- Assessment accommodations that are available and when to use them with students with disabilities and English language learners.
- There are different ways to report results: normative interpretations and criterion-referenced interpretations.
- How to provide effective feedback from assessments suitable for different audiences: descriptive versus evaluative.
- Sound grading and reporting practices.

A TLAS GRADUATE CAN:

- Competency 1:** Effectively design and implement sound assessment for and of learning opportunities for students, based on consistent interpretation and application of state standards.
- Competency 2: Develop** and use a classroom assessment plan that reflects a balanced approach to assessment.
- Competency 3:** Understand and effectively use the formative assessment process.
- Competency 4:** Know and understand the elements of quality assessments of learning. Be able to develop or select appropriate assessments of learning. Have the ability to interpret, communicate, and use results from these appropriately.
- Competency 5:** Create a classroom environment that uses classroom assessment-related practices to promote student involvement in the assessment process to enable reflective, self-directed learners.
- Competency 6:** Report meaningful evidence of student achievement to various stakeholders to certify the achievement level of the student.
- Competency 7:** Understand, explain, advocate for, and promote practices and policies that support quality classroom assessment and assessment systems.

Framework provided by Michigan's [Teacher Leader Preparation Standards](#)