

# USCIS Guide to Creating an Adult Citizenship Education Curriculum



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Part 1: Creating a Curriculum Abstract</b> . . . . .       | <b>3</b>  |
| What is a Curriculum Abstract? . . . . .                      | 4         |
| 1. Description of Program . . . . .                           | 5         |
| 2. Instructor Bios . . . . .                                  | 6         |
| 3. Predicted Student Demographics . . . . .                   | 7         |
| 4. Description of Community that the Program Serves . . . . . | 8         |
| 5. Course Abstract. . . . .                                   | 9         |
| 6. Course Objectives. . . . .                                 | 10        |
| 7. Course Structure. . . . .                                  | 11        |
| 8. Student Expectations. . . . .                              | 12        |
| 9. Course Text(s). . . . .                                    | 13        |
| 10. Supplemental Instructional Materials . . . . .            | 14        |
| 11. Instructional Space/Resources . . . . .                   | 15        |
| 12. Standardized ESL Assessments . . . . .                    | 16        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>Part 2: Creating a Scope and Sequence</b> . . . . .        | <b>17</b> |
| What is a Scope and Sequence?. . . . .                        | 17        |
| Steps to Creating a Scope and Sequence . . . . .              | 17-19     |
| Scope and Sequence Worksheet. . . . .                         | 20-31     |

# Introduction

The Office of Citizenship within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) developed this workbook to help administrators and teachers design an adult citizenship education curriculum. It has been created to supplement the Adult Citizenship Education Sample Curriculum and the Adult Citizenship Education Content Standards and Foundational Skills, which are available on the Citizenship Resource Center website ([uscis.gov/citizenship](https://uscis.gov/citizenship)).

The workbook guides readers through the process of creating a curriculum abstract and a scope and sequence. The curriculum abstract provides a general overview of the program and the course. The scope and sequence outlines the order and duration that the content will be delivered, and it includes an alignment chart that maps when specific content will be taught and how it lines up with the course textbook and the 100 civics questions.

This workbook is designed to help administrators and educators develop a process for creating adult citizenship curricula, not for promoting a specific curricular structure.

# What is a Curriculum Abstract?

A curriculum abstract outlines the basic information about a course, and where that course fits within a program's broader educational capacity. This includes information about the program, such as the type of services it offers, the population it serves, and a description of the larger community. It also briefly describes the course content and objectives, the course structure, and the instructional strategies and resources that will be used during the course.

The information in a curriculum abstract is organized in such a way that anyone can read it and understand why the course is being offered and how it will operate. For instance, a new teacher assigned to a course can read the curriculum abstract and understand what the course covers and how it fits in with the program's broader mission. Alternatively, potential community partners can use a curriculum abstract when determining whether an organization's courses and services align with theirs.

For curriculum writers, creating an abstract is a necessary exercise to organize all of the information about a course that they need to develop the scope and sequence.

The precise information that is included in a curriculum abstract may vary based on the program, the community, the subject matter, the course objectives, or the learning environment. This workbook is specifically designed to help you develop a curriculum abstract for an adult citizenship education course. It is not exhaustive, and you may want to include information that is not specifically identified in the materials that have been provided.

# 1. Description of Program

Provide a brief description of your program (100 – 150 words) that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Program name
- Type of program (non-profit, CBO, adult education center, etc.)
- Services offered
- Description of adult citizenship education courses offered
- Basic program structure
- Any other information deemed relevant or unique to the program

## Example:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Description of Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Springfield Adult Education Center<sup>2</sup> (SAEC) is a local nonprofit organization that provides GED, ESL, and citizenship education courses in the area.</li><li>• SAEC offers leveled courses for students at the low beginning, high beginning, and low intermediate ESL levels. Students are tested and placed using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) assessment. Students who are below the low beginning level are encouraged to enroll in an adult ESL course.</li><li>• SAEC operates on a semester system. Each semester lasts 18 weeks. The first semester runs from October to February, and the second semester runs from March through July.</li></ul> |
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# 2. Instructor Bio(s)

Include brief professional biographies (50 – 100 words) for all instructors who will be teaching the course.

**Example:**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Instructor's Bio | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Name), who holds a master's degree in ESL from (university), has been teaching adult ESL for eight years and adult citizenship education for the past three years, and previously taught at (school).</li> </ul> |
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# 6. Course Objectives

Identify 3 – 5 learning objectives that you want students to achieve by the end of the course. Objectives should be specific and measurable. An objective like “Students will learn about American civics and history,” only broadly identifies the content that students will learn. A more comprehensive objective identifies the content and the level of mastery of the content that students should expect to achieve.

## Example:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Course Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will be able to understand and complete the Form N-400.</li><li>• Students will be able to speak, read, and write English at the high beginning ESL level.</li><li>• Students will be able to correctly answer at least 90 of the 100 civics questions.</li></ul> |
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# 7. Class Structure

Provide the basic information about your class structure. This information is not limited to, but should include:

- Start and end date
- Duration of court
- Day and time of class meetings
- Relevant information about course structure and how class time will be used.

## Example:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Course Structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The course starts on (date) and ends on (date).</li><li>• There are 15 weeks of instruction.</li><li>• The course will meet on Tuesdays from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.</li><li>• The course is structured around the USCIS low beginner lesson plans on the Citizenship Resource Center website.</li><li>• Time will be devoted in each class to addressing the language and requirements of one part of the Form N-400.</li><li>• The course will consist of three units organized thematically based on the civics content of the naturalization test.</li><li>• A unit test will be administered at the end of each unit that will assess students' English language skills and understanding of the civics content.</li><li>• The course includes a comprehensive final exam on the last day of class.</li></ul> |
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# Scope & Sequence Workbook

## What is a Scope and Sequence?

A scope and sequence is the core of a curriculum. While it can often be time-consuming to create, a well-developed scope and sequence can increase the consistency of instruction in your program. From an administrator's perspective, if all teachers on staff are following the same scope and sequence, it will ensure that the content and quality of instruction that students receive in class is more predictable from teacher-to-teacher. From a teacher's perspective, having a fully developed scope and sequence that is aligned with a textbook, the appropriate content standards, and relevant assessments makes lesson planning much easier. It means not having to wonder what content to teach and when, because it is all laid out in the scope and sequence table. Then, the teachers can focus their creativity and energy on deciding how to teach the content when developing their lesson plans.

Creating a scope and sequence for an adult citizenship education course can be a challenge. Courses in most other settings usually have one or two content areas that need to be organized and aligned. An adult citizenship education curriculum has three content areas:

1. civics/history
2. ESL
3. the naturalization process and Form N-400

Your scope and sequence should address when and for how long your course will cover the knowledge and skills included with each content area. To find out what knowledge and skills are included with these three content areas, please review the USCIS Guide to the Adult Citizenship Education Content Standards and Foundational Skills. You can use this document as a checklist to make sure your courses cover all of the knowledge and skills that your students need to prepare for naturalization.

There is no single or best way to organize the content. You can organize it any way that makes sense to you or that best fits your students' needs. It is easiest to begin by creating a spreadsheet (like the one provided below), so you have room to organize the sequence of content delivery and align the content with the relevant course materials. You will also need a copy of your course textbook, The USCIS Guide to the Adult Citizenship Education Content Standards and Foundational Skills, and any other relevant reference or resource material that your program uses. You may also want to have a copy of the USCIS Adult Citizenship Education Sample Curriculum on hand as a reference.

## Steps to Creating a Scope and Sequence

Once you have your materials collected, you can use the following process to help you create your scope and sequence:

### Step 1: Identify Course Structure

When you begin creating your scope and sequence, the first things to consider is the duration of the overall course and how the individual classes are structured. This affects how much time you devote to the three content areas during a class. For example, the USCIS Adult Citizenship Education Sample Curriculum outlines a 15-week course that meets twice a week for two hours. In each class, the first 90 minutes are spent using sheltered or contextualized instructional strategies that use the civics and history content to teach ESL knowledge and skills. The last 30 minutes of classes focus on teaching the naturalization process and the Form N-400. However, it is certainly possible to break the curriculum down into units where civics, history, and ESL are covered in the first few units, while naturalization, the Form N-400, and ESL are covered in the last unit or two.

## Step 2: Identify the Content Driver

When working with multiple content areas in one course, it helps to identify a single content area that will provide the fundamental structure for the rest of the course. In adult citizenship education courses, the content driver tends to be the history and civics content. This is perhaps due to the fact that the history content, in particular, offers a very natural and obvious chronological progression. It is then possible to weave in the ESL knowledge and skills through the history content. Of course, someone with experience teaching ESL may prefer to use ESL as the content driver. The value of identifying a content driver is that it simply gives you a place to start, and you are able to organize your course more efficiently.

## Step 3: Create Scope and Sequence for Content Driver

Once you have identified your content driver, lay out the scope and sequence for that content area. Focus on the one content area. Trying to organize all three content areas at once can quickly become confusing and overwhelming. Identify the number of days of instruction in the course. Make a note of any holidays or events that might conflict with class times or cause class to be cancelled. Also remember to take into account the number of days for assessment (unit tests, midterms, finals, post-testing, etc.), or any special events or presentations in which students are in class but are not necessarily connected to the scope and sequence. It will be easier to start by creating a sequence of units. If you use history and civics as a content driver, you may create three or four units with one on Early American History, another on Modern American History, and a third on government and civics. Of course, there are a variety of ways to organize the units and it depends on what you select for your content driver, the duration of the course, the duration of each class, and your creativity. Once you have your units established, then go back and create the scope and sequence for the individual lessons. These should be broad titles that simply describe the general scope the content that will be taught in that lesson. For instance, you might teach a lesson on “The Constitution,” “Is/Are Verbs,” or “Parts 1 – 5” of the Form N-400. This is not the time to dig too deeply into the specifics of what goes into the lesson. That should be saved for lesson planning.

## Step 4: Create Scope and Sequence for Second Content Area

After you have developed the scope and sequence for the content driver, then create one for the second content area. If possible, try to align the content from the secondary content with the content driver so that you are able to create more thematic lessons. For instance, an ESL lesson on using “when” and “where” question words could align easily with a lesson on Parts 4 of the Form N-400, where applicants are asked to list information about dates and locations of the places they have lived. This may not always be possible or there may be multiple concepts that do not align perfectly. Therefore, there is no reason to overburden with trying to perfectly align the two content areas.

## Step 5: Create Scope and Sequence for Third Content Area

Next, create the scope and sequence for the third content area. It is not necessary to try to align all three content areas to one another. In fact, the third content area may operate somewhat independently. For instance, in the USCIS Adult Citizenship Education Sample Curriculum, the civics content is aligned with the ESL knowledge and skills; however, the naturalization and N-400 scope and sequence simply follows sequentially through the parts of the Form N-400

## Step 6: Align the Scope and Sequence with the Course Text(s)

Next, you should align the scope and sequence with the textbook that your organization has chosen for that course. Simply identify the chapters from the text that correspond with the content that is addressed in the lesson.

## **Step 7: Align Scope and Sequence to the Content Standards**

After you have aligned your scope and sequence with the textbook, align it with the USCIS Adult Citizenship Education Content Standards and Foundational Skills. In this document, you will notice that there are “content standards,” which are broader rubrics that encompass several smaller concepts; and there are “progress standards”, which identify more specific information for students to learn. The latter is identified by both a letter and a number (e.g. 6r). When you are aligning your scope and sequence with the USCIS Adult Citizenship Education Content Standards and Foundational Skills, you will want to focus on these progress standards. For each day of instruction, identify any progress standard that relates to the content you will be teaching for that day. Some of these progress standards may be used multiple times, some may even be used every day, while others may only be used once. The goal is to include each progress standard at least once in your course.

## **Step 8: Align Civics and History Content to the 100 Civics Questions**

Lastly, align the civics and history content with the 100 civics questions. Similar to the progress standards, some questions may be covered multiple times while others are only covered once. To do this, simply identify the question(s) from the 100 civics questions that correspond with the history and civics content that is covered on a given day.

# Scope and Sequence Worksheet

Week:

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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**Week:**

| Day | Civics | ESL | N-400 | Chapter | Speaking Test | Civics Test | Reading Test | Writing Test | Civics Questions |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
|     |        |     |       |         |               |             |              |              |                  |
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