FACT SHEET
2014 Link & Learn Taxes – Volunteer Certification Test
November 2014

This document provides information about the volunteer courses and certification tests via Link & Learn Taxes.

Background

Link & Learn Taxes provides online courses and certification tests for all individuals interested in volunteering in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: How do I access the online test?
A1: From the Link & Learn Taxes page, http://apps.irs.gov/app/vita/, select the **VITA/TCE Central** link and select "Leave the IRS site." If you have an existing account, you can enter your user name and password. If not, create a new account. Once you are logged in, select your preferred certification level from the tabs along the top of the screen. You must first complete the Volunteer Standards of Conduct exam. Then, when you are ready to complete any subsequent exams, click on the exam link and select "Launch" from the upper right-hand corner of the pop-up box. If the word "Launch" does not appear, you have not yet completed a prerequisite for the exam you selected.

Q2: What is the passing score for certification?
A2: The passing score is 80% or higher.

Q3: What if I do not pass a test on my first attempt?
A3: If you are taking the paper test (Form 6744), there is a retest following each test which asks different questions for the same scenarios used in the test. The online test allows a total of 2 attempts at certification for each test. The questions for the online test are randomized from the pool of questions used on the paper test and retest. The result is a different test on each attempt.

Q4: What if I am unable to complete an online test in one session?
A4: The online system will bookmark where you stop in an online test. When you log back in, the system will show "in progress" for the test you were taking. Just click on that link to continue with the test.

Q5: What if I need to change an answer on the online test?
A5: In the online test there is a "back" button so you can change your answer to a question. At the end of the test there will be a message displaying your answers and any questions that have not been answered. You will need to complete all questions and then hit the submit key. The **HELP** link provides test tips that will avoid input errors.

Q6: Are there any helpful hints for taking the online test?
A6: When entering a fill-in answer, use only numbers; do not use any symbols such as dollar signs, commas, decimal points, etc.

Q7: What documentation can I obtain if I certify through the online test with Link & Learn Taxes?
A7: Once you successfully complete a test you can print a course certificate and print or save a copy of the Form 13615, Volunteer Standards of Conduct Agreement. Volunteers can sign Form 13615 electronically.

Q8: What if I forget my password for the online test?
A8: At the bottom of the online test login screen click the "Forgot Password" link and follow the directions. Be sure to enter your email address correctly during the registration process so you will receive e-mail notifications about your login or password.

Q9: Can I use references to complete the test?
A9: The test is an open book test. You can use forms, instructions and other reference material to take the test. You should complete the test on your own.

Q10: What tax year does the test use for answers to the questions?
A10: The answers are based on **2014** tax rates, deductions, and exemptions. Tax year 2014 VITA/TCE training materials, tax forms, instructions and publications are available on www.irs.gov.

Q11: Do I have to take the Basic course before taking any of the other courses?
A11: The instructions for taking the **courses** on Link & Learn Taxes and the instructions for **certification** on the online test site are different.

Instructions for taking the **courses** online:
On Link & Learn Taxes, each course is self-contained. The Basic tab includes just the Basic course. The Advanced tab includes all Basic and Advanced information. The optional courses only contain the information for that particular subject. If you are an experienced volunteer, you can choose to review the returning volunteer course rather than the entire Basic or Advanced course. If you received training in a classroom setting or using the Publication 4491, you may proceed directly to the online test without reviewing the Link & Learn Taxes course.

Instructions for **certification** online:
For certification (testing) - you must first pass the Volunteer Standards of Conduct test. You can then choose either the Basic or the Advanced test. After completing the Basic test, you may take the optional Health Savings Accounts, Foreign Students and Scholars, or the Puerto Rico test. If you take and pass the Advanced certification instead, you have the option of taking the Health Savings Accounts, Puerto Rico, Military or International tests. You **do not** have to complete the Basic test before taking the Advanced test.

Q12: Where is the Site Coordinator training?
A12: In order to have the Site Coordinator training available, you must register as a Site Coordinator when setting up your account. If you did not, go to "My Account," change the "Group" drop down box to Site Coordinator, and save. The training should now be available in your list.

Other Important Information
Each of the training courses may be instructor guided or self study, delivered in a classroom setting or online.

Many volunteers certify by keying the answers from the paper test booklet (Form 6744) into the online test on Link & Learn Taxes. **Caution: The questions on the online test may be either the test or the retest question from the Form 6744 (test booklet).** Be sure to read each question carefully before answering. Entering answers into the online test directly from the answer sheet in the test booklet may result in wrong answers.