

FACT SHEET for SPEC Partners & Employees

2018 Practice Lab



November 2018

This document provides information on accessing the Practice Lab through Link & Learn Taxes.

Update (11/14/18)

The initial release of the tax year 2018 Practice Lab will not have all the new tax reform changes programmed because the final IRS forms are not yet finalized. We have evaluated the impact to individuals taking the VITA/TCE Certification test. Volunteers should still be able to certify but you should proceed with caution when selecting answers as the Practice Lab may provide tax year 2018 calculations on 2017 forms. TaxSlayer will update the Practice Lab as final forms are approved.

Currently, volunteers may note the following discrepancies when preparing the test return preparation scenarios in the Practice Lab:

- *Basic Scenario 7 – Jacob & Martha Mills and Advanced Scenario 6 – Matthew & Mary Donnelley*
 - *The amount on line 22 of Schedule 1 is incorrect. Amounts from reserved lines 1 -9b are included in the total and shouldn't be. Therefore, an incorrect amount is being carried over to the left of line 6 on Form 1040. Test answers are not impacted.*
- *Basic Scenario 8 – Emily Clark, Advanced Scenario 5 – Fran Emerson, Military Scenario – Alvin & Kelly Blackburn, and Federal Tax Law Update for Circular 230 Professionals – Fran Rollins*
 - *The software is not calculating the Additional Child Tax Credit. The test answers are not impacted.*
- *Advanced Scenario 7 – Austin Drake*
 - *The deduction for Qualified Business Income (QBI) is not calculating. Therefore, Form 1040 line 11 (tax), line 15 (total tax), and line 22 (Amount you owe) are overstated. There is a question on the test regarding QBI, but volunteers are not asked to provide the calculation. They should be able to answer the question by reviewing the content on QBI in the training resources.*

Keep in mind, the calculation for the Child Tax Credit and Credit for Other Dependents appear on the same line. Volunteers will need to know the tax law to distinguish which credit(s) the taxpayer qualifies to receive, if applicable.

These discrepancies will cease once the software is updated with final forms and instructions.

Background

The Practice Lab is tax software that is integrated within Link & Learn Taxes. A link connects students to the 2018 tax preparation software which allows hands-on practice in preparing tax returns.

How to Access the Practice Lab

1. Go to Link and Learn Taxes at: <https://apps.irs.gov/app/vita/>.
2. Go to “Additional Resources” and click the link for the [Tax Software Practice Lab](#).
3. In the space provided enter the universal password: TRAINPROWEB (all capitals, no spaces).

4. If you have an existing account in the TaxSlayer Practice Lab, enter your username and password and click Sign In. (This is not the same username used at your regular site.)
5. Otherwise, click on the Create Account link, enter the required information and click the Create Account button.

How to Enter Returns in the Practice Lab

- Log into the Practice Lab using your username and password.
Note: If you forget your username or password, follow the links on the Sign In page.
- Tutorials are available for new users on the main landing page.
- Click on the Go to Practice Area button to start a new return.

Other Important Information about the Practice Lab

- The Practice Lab is a web-based product that uses the same version of TaxSlayer Pro Online software.
- The Practice Lab is updated prior to and throughout the tax season.
- The Deactivate Return option is not available in Practice Lab.
- Users can print returns and practice creating e-files from the Practice Lab.
- Users can minimize the Practice Lab screen or use the Alt+Tab keyboard shortcut. This allows them to toggle between the Practice Lab, the test, and/or Link & Learn Taxes at the same time.
- Users should reference [Publication 4012](#), Volunteer Resource Guide, for additional assistance in navigating the software.