

TOOLBOX

AUTOMATED CYBERSECURITY EXAMINATION TOOLBOX

Information Security Examination (ISE) USER MANUAL

Version 12.3.0.x User Manual

January 2025

This product was developed by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA).

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Chapter 1: Intro to the NCUA's Toolbox — ISE Model

The NCUA uses a risk-based approach to examine and supervise credit unions. The risk-based approach addresses seven categories of risk: Credit, Interest Rate, Liquidity, Transaction, Compliance, Strategic, and Reputation risk.

All federally insured credit unions receive an NCUA examination on a periodic basis. To ensure both compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and safety and soundness, a review of the credit union's information security program is performed at each examination. Risk-focused examinations allow examiners the flexibility to focus on material areas of current or potential concern given the credit unions business model. The objectives of an information security examination include:

- Evaluating management's ability to recognize, assess, monitor, and manage information systems and technology-related risks.
- Assessing whether the credit union has sufficient expertise to adequately plan, direct, and manage information systems and technology operations.
- Determining whether the board of directors has adopted and implemented adequate information systems and technology related policies and procedures.
- Evaluating the adequacy of internal information systems and technology controls and oversight to safeguard member information.

Information Security Examination (ISE)

The NCUA's information security examination program incorporates ISE. This program is designed for credit unions of all asset sizes and complexity. The ISE examination module offers three different use cases and exam levels, as outlined below:

Exam Type	User Form	When to use?
Small Credit Union Examination Program (SCUEP)	SCUEP ISE	\$50 Million or less
Risk-Focused	CORE ISE	All risk-focused exams greater than \$50 million
Risk-Focused	CORE+ ISE	All risk-focused exams with optional review areas

1.1 ISE Scope


The NCUA's information security examination program incorporates the following:

- Examiner evaluation tool,
- Examiner guidance and national policy,

- Review of Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act Security Compliance,
- Reviews of compliance with NCUA Regulations Parts 748 and 749,
- Review of fundamental security controls, and
- Collection of key data.

1.2 ISE Objectives

The NCUA's information security program continues to evolve in response to the changing cyber security landscape. The objectives of the information security examination (ISE) include:

- Evaluating management's ability to recognize, assess, monitor, and manage information systems and technology-related risks.
 - Assessing whether the credit union has sufficient expertise to adequately plan, direct, and manage information systems and technology operations.
 - Determining whether the board of directors has adopted and implemented policies and procedures to ensure adequate information systems and technology.
 - Evaluating the adequacy of internal information systems and technology controls and oversight to safeguard member information.
- 

Chapter 2: Using the ISE Examination in Toolbox

To begin working in ISE there are system requirements for installation. The user will also need to complete certain prep steps in creating an assessment. This includes inputting key **Demographics** of the credit union and answering nine **Exam Profile** statements in the **Prepare Tab**.

2.1 Getting Started — System Requirements Local Installation

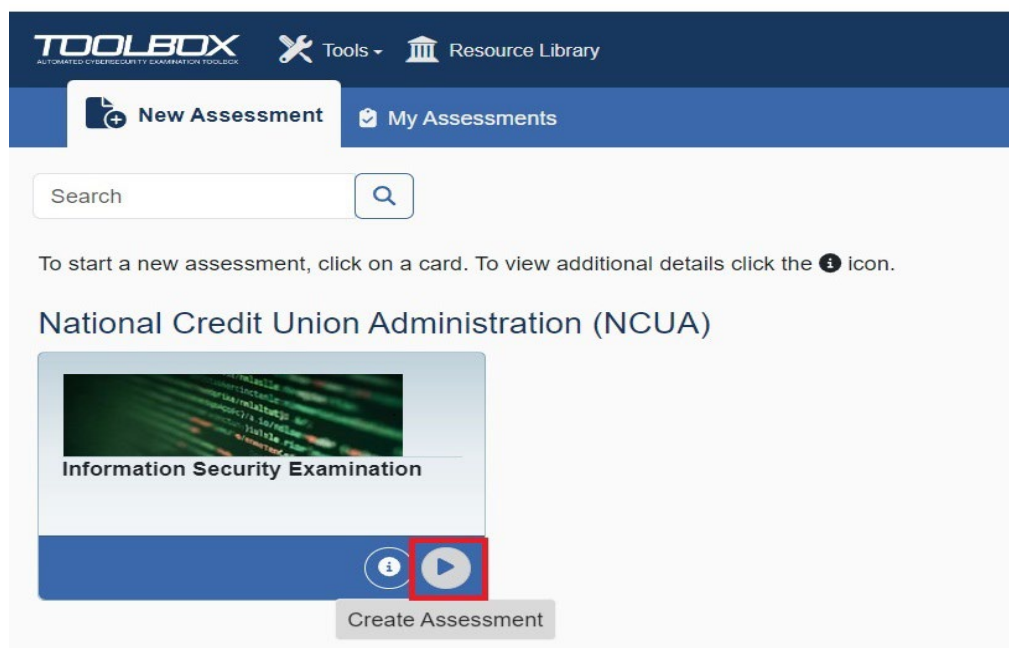
It is recommended that users meet the minimum system hardware and software requirements prior to installing The Toolbox. This includes:

- Pentium dual core 2.2 GHz processor (Intel x86 compatible)
- 6 GB free disk space
- 4 GB of RAM
- Microsoft Windows 10 or higher
- Microsoft .NET Framework 8.x Runtime
- SQL Server 2022 Express LocalDB (included with installation)

Note: For all platforms, the user should upgrade to the latest Windows Service Pack and install critical updates available from the Windows Update website to ensure the best compatibility and security.

2.2 Creating an ISE in Toolbox

Under the **New Assessment** Tab, choose the ISE card from the Gallery and hit the **Play** button. The examination will launch, bringing the user to the Toolbox Gallery page.



2.3 Examination Prep Steps

Demographics — Organization Details

The **Demographics** screen displays information specific to the credit union including the assessment date, assessment effective date, credit union charter, credit union name, credit union address, region, asset information, and the proposed exam level based on asset size (SCUEP and Core).

To identify a specific credit union, search using either the credit union name or charter number, other information will then be auto populated.

Next, insert the asset size. Based on the provided information, a proposed exam level will be provided. (Options are SCUEP or Core).

The screenshot shows the 'Demographics' screen in the 'TOOLBOX' application. The sidebar on the left has a 'Prepare' section with 'Demographics' and 'Exam Profile' options. The main form area is titled 'Demographics' and contains 'Organization Details'. Fields include 'Assessment Name' (ISE 00000 120624, 04:09:04), 'Assessment Date' (12/6/2024), 'Assessment Effective Date' (12/6/2024), 'Charter' (00000), 'Credit Union Name (Required)', 'City Or Site Name', 'State or Province', 'Region' (a dropdown menu), 'Assets (Required)' (\$ 0), 'Proposed Exam Level' (SCUEP), and 'Exam Level Override' (No Override). A red box highlights the 'Proposed Exam Level' field, and a blue callout bubble labeled '1 Proposed Exam Level' points to it.

1 Proposed Exam Level

SCUEP

SCUEP: Small Credit Union Examination Program is noted if the assets size is \$50,000,000 or less.

Core: When the asset size field is greater than \$50 Million, the Exam-Level will change to Core.

The screenshot shows the 'Demographics' section of the TOOLBOX application. The 'Exam Level Override' dropdown menu is highlighted with a red box and a blue callout bubble labeled '1'. The dropdown menu is open, showing the option 'CORE'.

Demographics

Organization Details

Assessment Name: ISE 60000 120624, 04:09:04

Assessment Date: 12/6/2024

Assessment Effective Date: 12/6/2024

Charter: 60000

Credit Union Name (Required):

City Or Site Name:

State or Province:

Region:

Assets (Required): \$ 0

Proposed Exam Level: SCUEP

Exam Level Override: CORE

1 Exam Level Override

1 Exam Level Override

Exam Level Override

The close-up shows the 'Exam Level Override' dropdown menu with the 'CORE' option selected.

CORE

The exam level override function may be used on SCUEP examinations to select "**Core**" level statements if desired. NCUA users should ensure they follow the steps noted in the most recent NCUA Instruction 5000.20 prior to using this function.

The screenshot shows the 'Demographics' section of the TOOLBOX application. The 'State-led examination?' checkbox is highlighted with a red box and a blue callout bubble labeled '1'. The checkbox is currently unchecked.

Demographics

Organization Details

Assessment Name: ISE 60000 120624, 04:09:04

Assessment Date: 12/6/2024

Assessment Effective Date: 12/6/2024

Charter: 60000

Credit Union Name (Required):

City Or Site Name:

State or Province:

Region:

Assets (Required): \$ 0

Proposed Exam Level: SCUEP

Exam Level Override: No Override

1 State-led examination?

1 State-led Examination

☐ State-led examination?

A check box will appear at the bottom of the **Demographics** screen for credit unions with a charter 6000 or above.

State Supervisory Authorities (SSA): This checkbox deactivates the submit button found on the Results section of the ISE assessment. Additionally, checking this box bypasses the requirement to complete ALL sub-statements prior to receiving the Reporting options under the Results tab. Therefore, an SSA can selectively complete individual portions of the ISE.

NCUA: NCUA Examiners should ensure they are following the scope requirements noted in the most recent NCUA instructions 5000.20 and the procedures in the most current revision of the National Supervision Policy Manual (NSPM). NCUA examiners are required to complete all sub-statements of the selected Exam-Level, submit those results, and upload the report to the appropriate Scope Task in MERIT.

Local Installation

TOOLBOX

Tools - Resource Library

Help -

Prepare ? Assessment Results

Home

Prepare

Demographics

Exam Profile

Assessment

Statements

Results

Reports

Activities / Services / Products

1. Number of employees

☐ Number of employees totals < 10

☐ Number of employees totals 10 - 50

☐ Number of employees totals 51 - 100

☐ Number of employees totals 101 - 500

☐ Number of employees is > 500

2. Previously issued concerns with the information security program / IT Services / IS&T during the most recent Examination, Supervision, or Scheduled Contact

☐ None issued

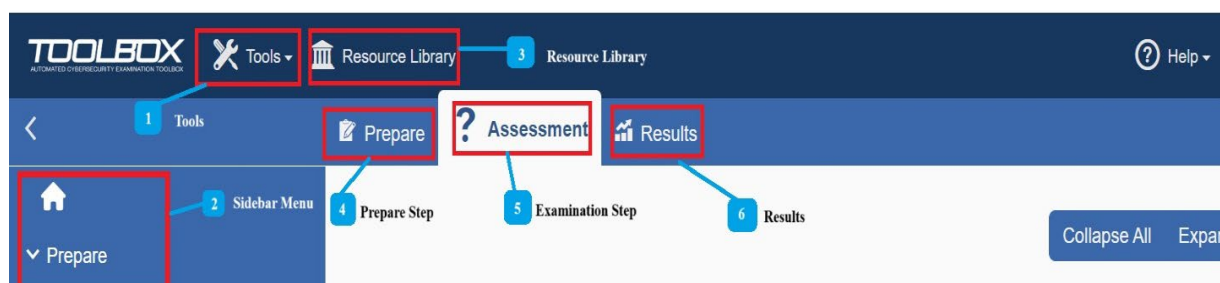
Exam Profile

The **Exam Profile** screen is also located under the **Prepare Tab**. There are two ways to access this screen. Users may either click the link located on the sidebar menu or click the next button on the bottom right of the **Demographics** page. This screen collects information specific to the credit union.

After collaborating with credit union management, provide responses to the nine areas in the **Exam Profile** by checking the correct box under each statement.

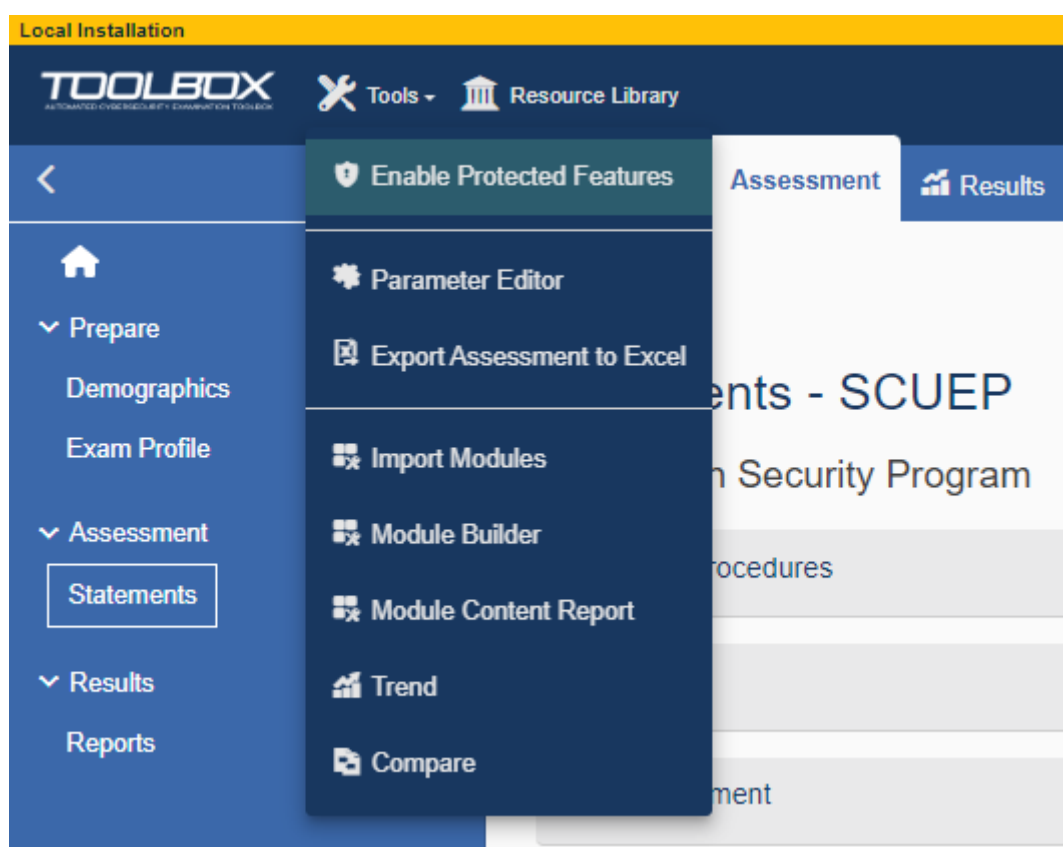
2.4 Top Menu Bar

The guidance below, shows images based on the **Assessment** tab in the Top Menu Bar selected.



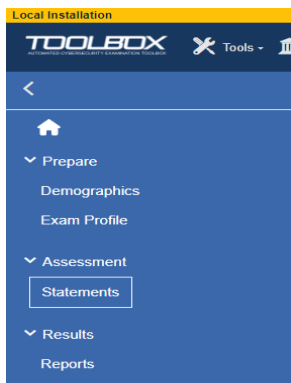
1 Tools

Selecting the drop-down Tools option expands the menu to show the following options.

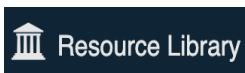


2 Expand or Collapse Sidebar Menu

This function expands the Sidebar Menu which includes links to the examination features. These are **Prepare**, where the **Demographics** and **Exam Profile** screen are located, **Assessment**, which includes all the **Statements**, and **Results**, where **Reports** are generated.



3 Resource Library



The Resource Library offers a collection of cybersecurity guidance and reference materials.

4 Prepare Step



The **Prepare** step is the first part of the examination process and includes the following preparatory items:

- The **Demographics** field to collect the credit union's information.
- The **Exam Profile** screen where additional information is collected.

5 Examination Step



The examination step includes the statements and sub-statements that make up the ISE Assessment.

6 Results

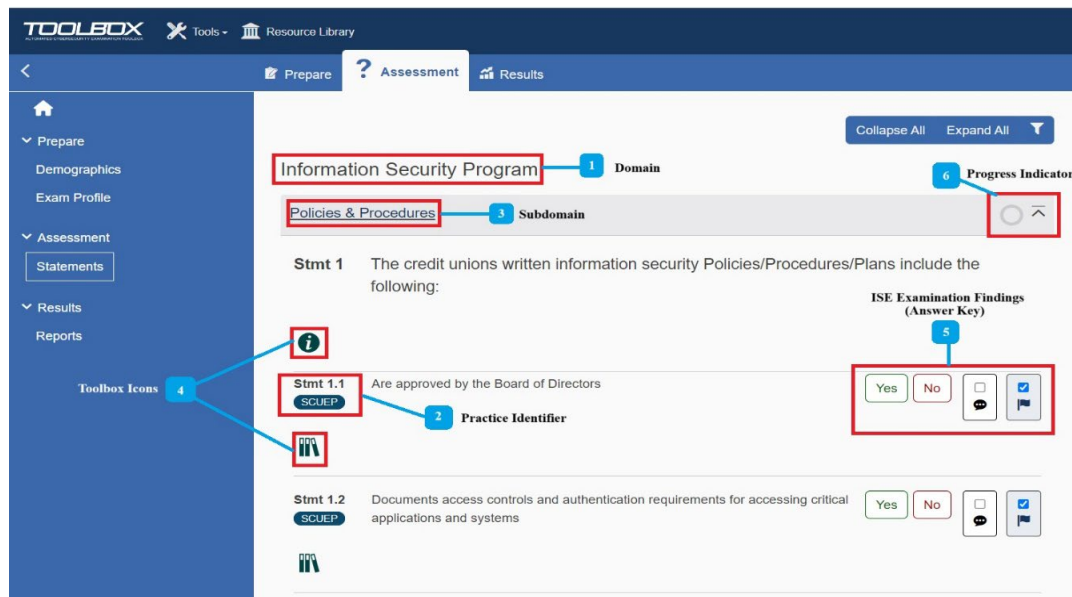


The **Results** section details the various compliance metrics and measurements resulting from a completed assessment. The **Reports** section is located after the **Results** section in the Sidebar Menu.

Chapter 3: ISE Quick Start Guide

The user should have a basic understanding of the key components noted in this chapter to navigate the assessment the user created.

3.1 ISE Statements and Toolbox Components Layout



There are six key areas within the **Assessment** Tab.

1 Domain

Information Security Program

This indicates to the user that the review being performed is the Information Security Program.

2 Practice Identifier

Stmnt 1.1
SCUEP

This shows the user the type of review being conducted (SCUEP or Core) and simplifies referencing a certain statement or sub-statement.

3 Subdomain

Policies & Procedures

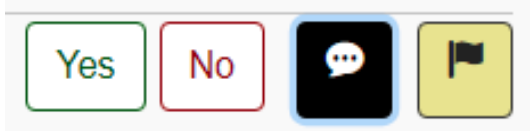
The statements provided are based on regulatory requirements and provide a benchmark in which the user can evaluate the credit union's current level of performance to its policies, procedures, and controls.





4 Toolbox Icons



In the ISE examination components noted below, the user will find a breakdown of each of the Toolbox-specific icons and how they help facilitate an ISE examination.

5 ISE Examination Findings (Answer Key)



-   Yes or No examination response options
-  Comments Icon
-  Mark for Review (Yellow highlighted flag)

6 Progress Indicator



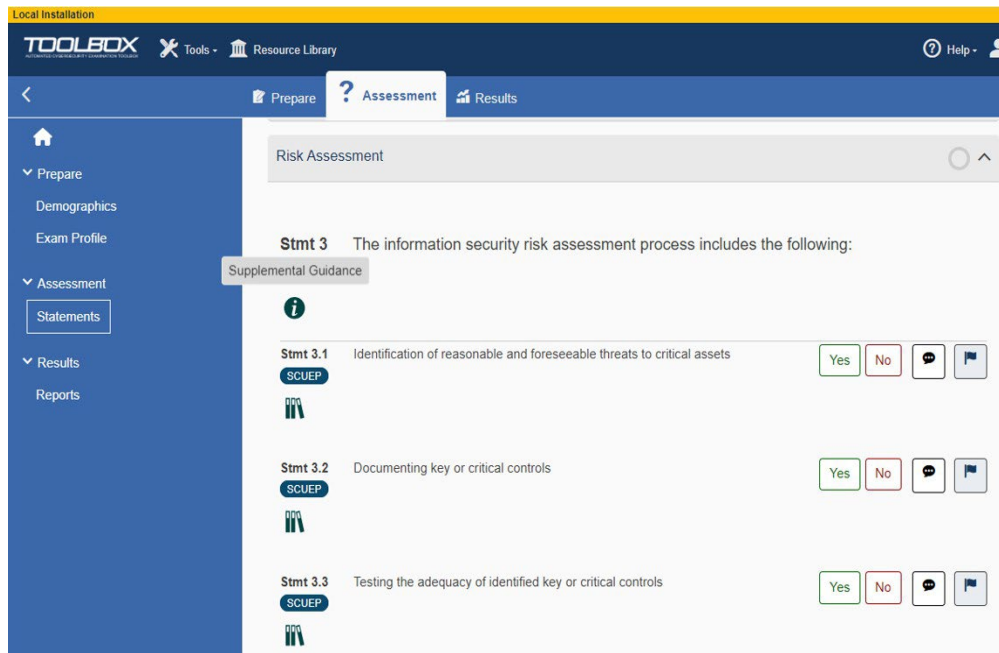
The Progress Indicator will turn blue and complete the circle as the questions are completed. When all the questions are complete, the Progress Indicator will show a check mark.

3.2 ISE Examination Components

This section details ISE Guidance, references, comments, and other examination features.

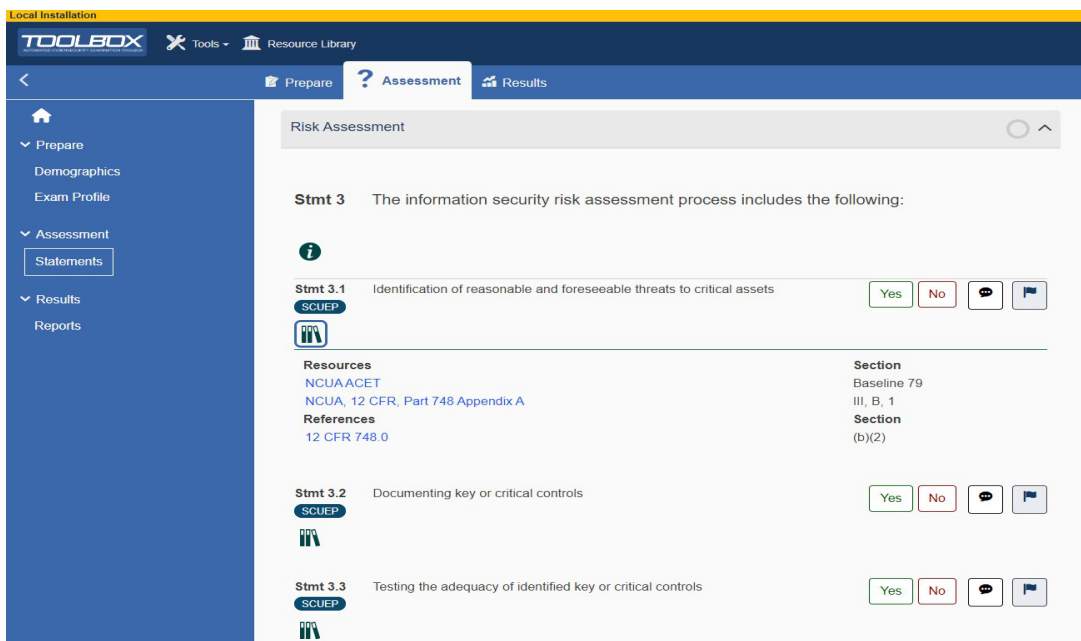
Supplemental Guidance

Users should refer to the supporting authorities and additional guidance provided under **Supplemental Guidance**. This is located under each statement and can be identified as a circle with a blue italicized lower-case i.



References

Users can click on the **References** icon to open additional references, resources, and links to ISE .pdf documentation. Documents will open in a separate window. These are located under each sub-statement and identified by an icon of three book spines.



Comments

The “Comments” function for each sub-statement allows the assessor to record non-structured commentary for each sub-statement during the examination. These comments will not flow into the ISE Examination Report.

Stmnt 16.1
CORE

A process describing how changes to systems, applications, and user access are reviewed and approved, such as hardware, operating systems, software applications, system configurations.

Description, explanation and/or justification for comment

Statement Summary

Statement Summary is available at the bottom of each statement. This is where the user may summarize the review of all sub-statements and any results. Comments noted in this section will be generated in the Examination Report that is attached to the scope.

TOOLBOX
Automated Cybersecurity Examination Tool

Tools
Resource Library

Help

Prepare
Assessment
Results

Home
Prepare
Demographics
Exam Profile
Assessment
Statements
Results
Reports

Stmnt 1.8
CORE

Assigns specific responsibility for the security program's implementation

Expand CORE+

Hide Issues

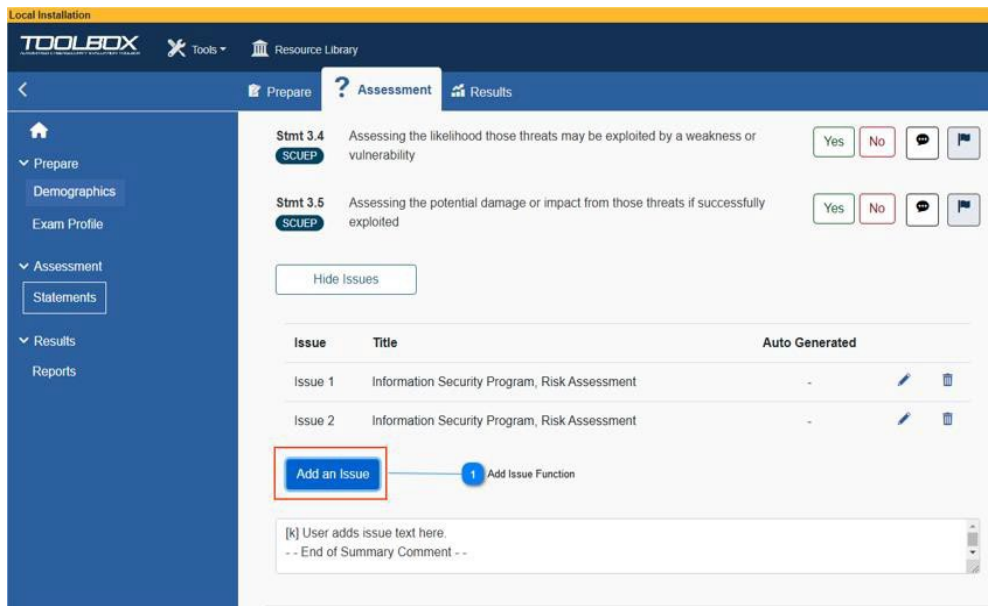
Add an Issue

Statement Summary

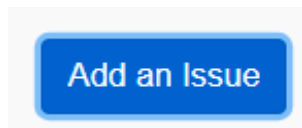
Statement Summary (insert summary)

Issues

When a sub-statement is answered "No", an auto generated issue will appear. The description and action items are suggested language, and the user may tailor the wording to the credit union's unique situation. This section will walk the user through how to add additional issues. Issues are included in the ISE Examination Report that is attached to the applicable MERIT scope task.



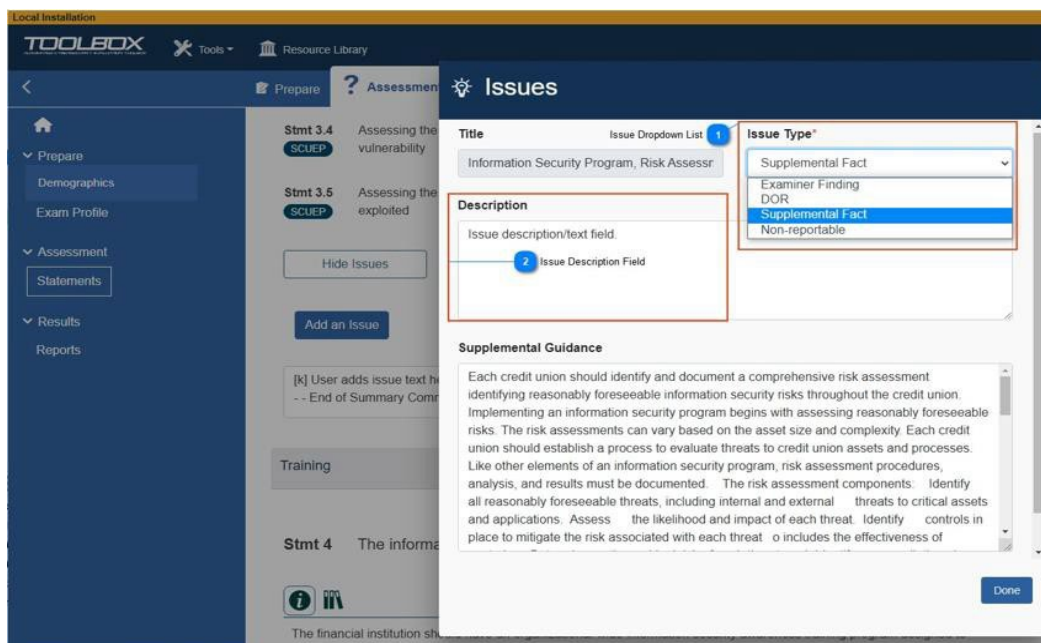
1 Add an Issue Function



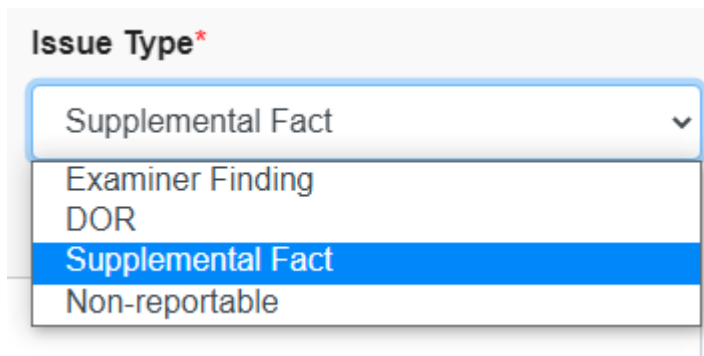
Users can use the Add an Issue function to create relevant issues and or formal comments to each domain throughout the assessment.

Issues Function Detail

After clicking on the Add an Issue button, a drop-down list will appear requiring the user to choose an Issue Type and to include a Description.



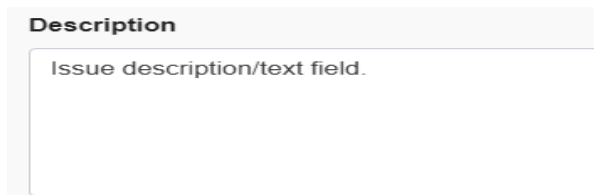
1 Issue Dropdown List



The screenshot shows a dropdown menu titled "Issue Type*" with a downward arrow on the right. The menu is open, displaying four options: "Supplemental Fact", "Examiner Finding", "DOR", and "Supplemental Fact". The "Supplemental Fact" option is highlighted with a blue background.

Choose from the Issue Type drop down list to further categorize an issue. Issue types are Examiner Finding, DOR, Supplemental Fact, or Non-reportable.

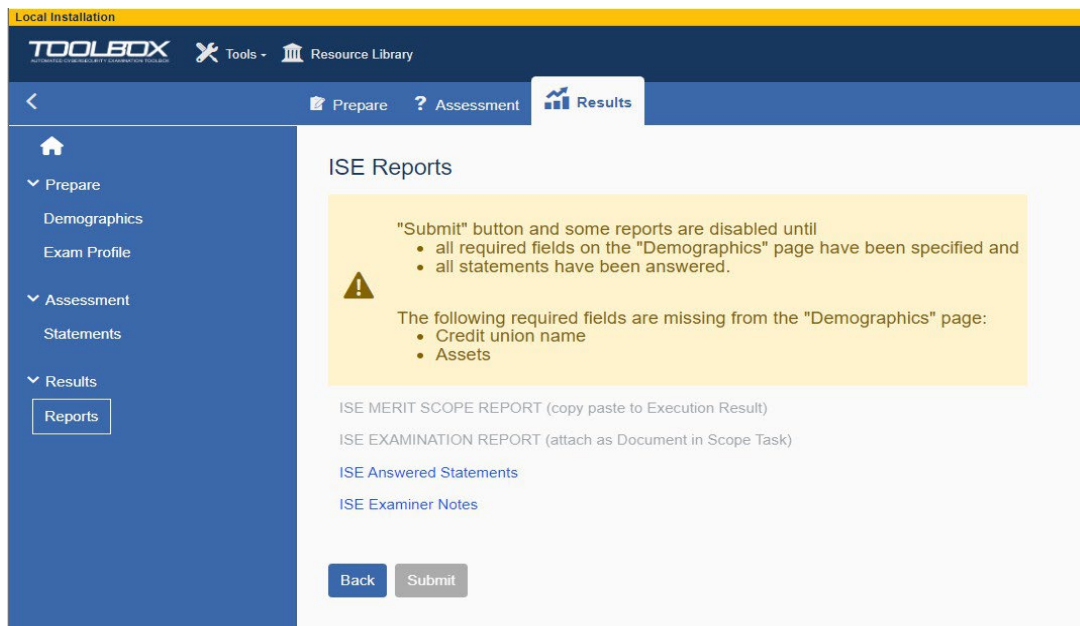
2 Issue Description Field



The screenshot shows a text input field labeled "Description". Inside the field, the placeholder text "Issue description/text field." is visible.

In the Issue Description Field add free-form text to the box.

3.3 ISE Results and Reports



The screenshot shows the "Results" tab of the Toolbox application. The sidebar navigation on the left includes "Prepare", "Assessment", and "Results". Under "Results", the "Reports" option is selected. The main content area is titled "ISE Reports" and contains a yellow warning box with the following text:

"Submit" button and some reports are disabled until

- all required fields on the "Demographics" page have been specified and
- all statements have been answered.

The following required fields are missing from the "Demographics" page:

- Credit union name
- Assets

Below the warning box, there are four links:

- ISE MERIT SCOPE REPORT (copy paste to Execution Result)
- ISE EXAMINATION REPORT (attach as Document in Scope Task)
- ISE Answered Statements
- ISE Examiner Notes

At the bottom of the page, there are two buttons: "Back" and "Submit".

Sidebar Navigation shows ISE **Results** and **Reports** options. The Toolbox application offers the following ISE Reports:

- **ISE Merit Scope Report:** (Copy and paste to Execution Result)
- **ISE Examination Report:** (Attach as a document to the scope task)
- **ISE Answered Statements:** an accounting of all examination responses and the Exam Level that applies to each statement.
- **ISE Examiner Notes:** An accounting of the user's comments and observations.

Note: *If an examination has not been fully completed, the Submit button and Reports may not be available.*

Submit Function

Once the full review of the ISE has been completed and results are ready to submit, the user will click on the submit button located on the bottom left of the **Results** tab. A notification will either generate indicating the report has already been submitted or by showing submission success.



Submission Success

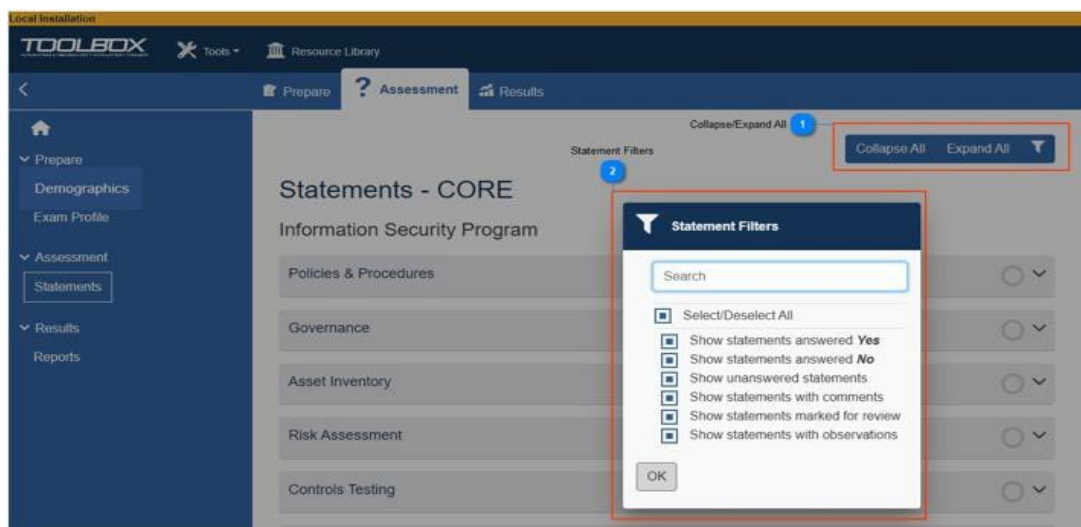
The file '96d69a2a-94fc-4061-968a-728a8af4eef1.json' was successfully created.

OK

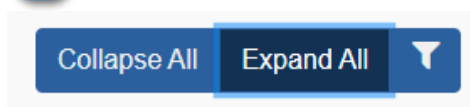
3.4 Additional Toolbox Functionality — Tailoring the Assessment Interface

Filtering Examination Questions and Content on the Screen

Before starting the examination, users may wish to tailor the content and questions to interact with.

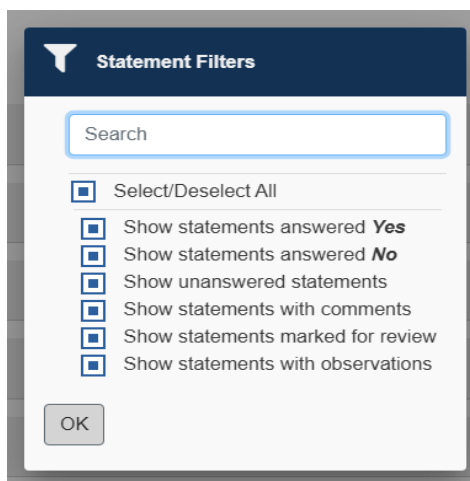


1 Collapse or Expand All



While in the **Assessment** Section of ISE, users can click the Collapse or Expand All buttons at the top right of the screen to adjust the amount of examination questions on the page.

2 Statement Filters



The Statements Filter will generate a pop-up screen. Select and de-select the checkboxes to tailor the review questions throughout the examination process. This feature is also useful during an on-screen examination review.

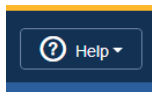
3.5 Toolbox Help Menu

To locate the ISE User Guide, use the Help Menu dropdown at the top right of the screen. Help material will open in a separate window for use throughout the

examination.



1 Help Menu: User Guides



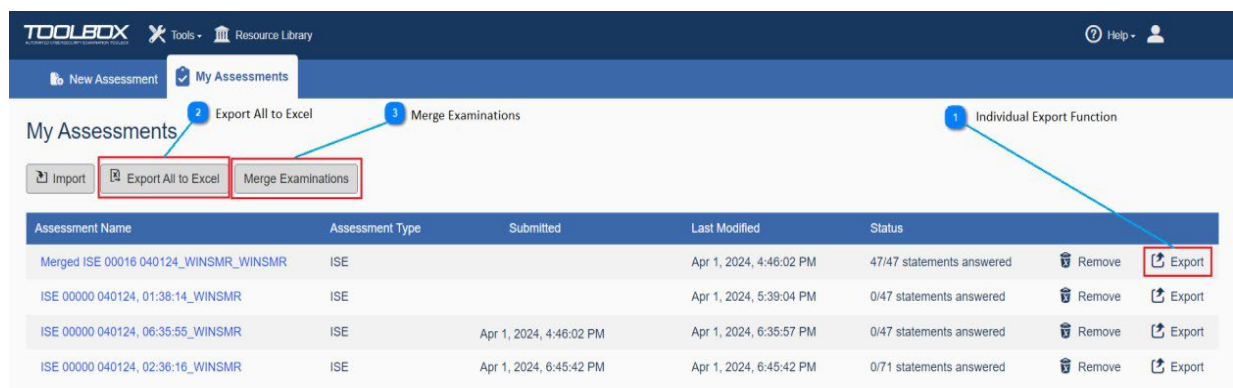
The ISE User Guide is in the Help dropdown menu.

Chapter 4: Sharing or Exporting an Examination

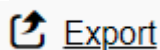
This chapter will go over the different ways in which a user may export an examination file. This is helpful when multiple users are completing sections within the assessment and the results will need to be compiled into one final report.

4.1 Exporting an ISE Assessment

To share an examination with a stakeholder, the Toolbox offers three export functions.



1 Individual Export Function



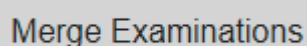
To export an assessment file, click the "Export" button. This is located to the right of the examination the user wishes to export. The downloaded .acet file will be stored in the Downloads folder, unless otherwise specified in settings.

2 Export All to Excel



Exports the examination in Excel format.

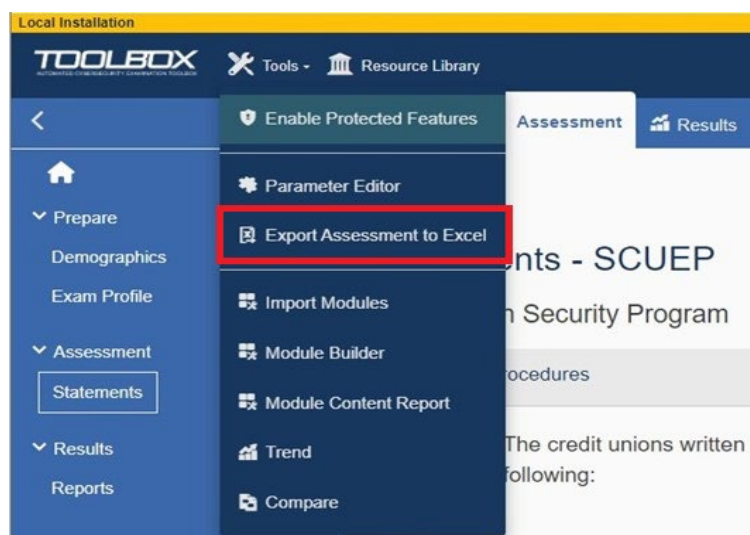
3 Merge Examinations



Use this functionality to merge two or more Examinations into one. The first examination selected will be the "Lead Exam". The values from this examination will be selected as the default in cases of conflicts between the files. This functionality also includes a conflict resolution component.

4.2 Tools Menu: Export in Excel

This option is recommended for sharing basic data only, and not recommended for full sharing functionality. Selecting the "Export to Excel" link, will download an Excel copy of examination results.



Note: Depending on examination type underway by the user, the Excel report will be downloaded in the mode of the examination taken, i.e. SCUEP vs. Core mode.

Question_Id	Question_Group_Heading	Simple_Question	Answer_Text	Mark_For_Review	Is_Question	Is_Requirement	Is_Component	Is_Framework	Component_Id	Answer_Id	Comment	Alternate_Justification	Comp
6223	Policies Procedures General	The facility should have documented and distributed: 1. Cyber security policies (including a change management policy). 2. Plans/processes and supporting procedures commensurate with the facility's current IT operating environment.	Y	False	False	True	False	False	0	38360			
6224	Policies Procedures General	The facility should designate one or more individuals to manage cyber security who can demonstrate proficiency through a combination of training, education, and/or experience sufficient to develop cyber security policies and procedures and ensure compliance with all applicable industry and governmental cyber security requirements.	Y	False	False	True	False	False	0	38361			
6225	Access Control	The facility should identify and document systems boundaries (i.e., the electronic perimeter) and has implemented security controls to limit access across those boundaries.	N	False	False	True	False	False	0	38362			
6226	Access Control	The facility should establish and document a business requirement for every external connection to/from its critical systems. The facility external connections should have controls that permit access only to authorized and authenticated users.	NA	False	False	True	False	False	0	38363			
6227	Access Control	The facility should practice the concept of least privilege.	A	False	False	True	False	False	0	38364			

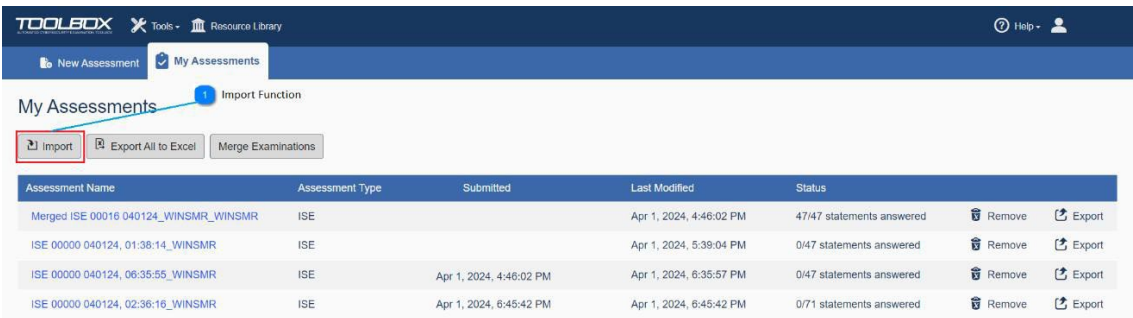
Chapter 5: Importing an Existing Examination

Importing an existing examination is used on examinations when two or more individuals are completing sections within the ISE assessment. Once the exported file has been received, the user will then need to import it into their ISE Toolbox. This chapter will walk the user through how to perform this task.

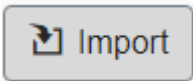
5.1 Importing the .Acet File

In the stand-alone version of Toolbox (running locally) users can import a legacy .acet file.

- Click the Import button to begin the process.
- The file explorer will open.
- Select the .acet file to import.
- The upload dialogue will open.
- Once the dialogue has closed, refresh the landing page to see the imported assessment.



1 Import Function



This button is in the top left corner of the My Assessments landing page. The user will then be able to open the imported assessment to review the data. Refer to Section 4.2 of this guide on merging two files.