

TALKING POINTS - SPEC

Link & Learn Taxes – Practice Lab



November 2009

Key Messages:

- Link & Learn Taxes is an e-learning option for practice, training and certification for VITA/TCE volunteers and SPEC employees.
- The Practice Lab is 2009 tax preparation software accessible through Link & Learn Taxes.
- The universal password is: [REDACTED] *
- Go to *Create New User* for a UserID.
- The Practice Lab will enable users to prepare tax returns online for purposes of practice and testing.
- The Practice Lab is accessible from the menu page of following courses: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Military, International, and Puerto Rico.
- The Practice Lab is also accessible from the log in screen for the certification test.
- Safeguard your User ID.

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These talking points were developed to provide Territory Managers, Tax Consultants and Partners information on use of the Practice Lab available on Link & Learn Taxes.

SPEC – Link & Learn Taxes

Link & Learn Taxes, *linking volunteers to quality e-learning solutions*, is the web-based learning program providing online training in tax return preparation. Volunteers can pick the time and place for training, available 24 hours a day.

Practice Lab, is the electronic tax software that is integrated with Link & Learn Taxes. A link connects the student to 2009 tax preparation software which allows hands-on practice in preparing tax returns.

To access the Practice Lab

1. Go to Link and Learn Taxes on irs.gov – <http://www.irs.gov/app/vita/>
2. Select any course and click the start course link.
3. Click on the **Practice Lab** button to the right of the course menu.
4. Select “*Leave the IRS*” button
5. In the space provided enter the universal password: [REDACTED] * (all lowercase, no spaces).
6. Click on **Create New User** link.
7. Enter your **ZIP code** and, if available, an **email address**.
7. Click on **Create User ID** button.
8. The system will generate a six digit **User ID**, and if appropriate send you an email with the User ID. This User ID is used as part of the SSN and in preparing tax returns in the test and workbook scenarios. **Caution: Safeguard your User ID.** It **cannot** be retrieved and you will need it to log on every time you enter the Practice Lab.

9. Log into the **Practice Lab** using your **User ID** and **ZIP Code**.
10. Click the “Here” link to access the **Tutorial** which is available for new users.
11. Click on **New Return** button on the menu bar to start a new return.

Remember: If you forget or lose your User ID, you will need to create a new User ID.

Important Information about the Practice Lab

- The Practice Lab is a web-based product that uses a modified version of **TaxWise Online (TWO) Training**. It is not the TaxWise Online Training program.
- To calculate and save the data entered, you **must** select the **SAVE button** on the tool bar at the top of the screen. This program does not auto-refresh.
- The print function is not enabled at this time. Users can minimize the Practice Lab screen in order to view the tax return and the test at the same time. You can also utilize Alt+tab to toggle between the Practice Lab and the Link & Learn Taxes.
- A **tutorial** titled “Getting Started” can be accessed on the main page of the Practice Lab. Users should reference **Publication 4012, Volunteer Resource Guide, blue tabs**, for additional assistance in navigating the Practice Lab.

* The universal password has been blacked out in line with keeping access to the site to authorized users. The password may be obtained from the SPEC Relationship Manager. by <http://www.vita-volunteers.org> 11/15/2009