

# Position Paper of the Interdisciplinary Council

on

## Vocational Evaluation and Assessment

by

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The Interdisciplinary Council on Vocational Evaluation and Assessment is a national coalition that was formed in 1992 to represent the issues and concerns of personnel involved in vocational evaluation and assessment, across a variety of settings and disciplines.

The Interdisciplinary Council seeks to promote, through a unified voice, the responsible practice of vocational assessment and evaluation by encouraging advocacy, professional standards, communication, leadership and policy development, all of which enhance the overall provision of best practice.

The original organizations which comprised this coalition included:

- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
- American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA)
- Council for Educational Diagnostic Services (CEDS)
- Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT)
- National Association for Vocational Assessment in Education (NAVAE)
- National Association of Vocational Education Special Needs Personnel (NAVESNP)
- National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA)
- [Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment Professionals \(VECAP\)](#)
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
- National Association of Disability Evaluating Professionals (NADEP)
- [Commission on Certification of Work Adjustment and Vocational Evaluation Specialists \(CCWAVES\)](#)

### Goals and Objectives

- Provide an avenue for linkages among disciplines
- Promote a unified voice regarding certification, policy development, and legislation

- Promote professional standards of practice
- Promote the development of common language and definitions, recognizing diversity among disciplines
- Promote significant consumer participation in the development and implementation of vocational evaluation and assessment practices
- Provide a forum to discuss key concerns in the field and share information across disciplines
- Encourage the establishment of unified quality assurance in practice and outcome
- Promote public education and advocacy for vocational evaluation and assessment
- Advocate for support and funding of education

Vocational evaluation and assessment is a professional discipline which utilizes a systematic appraisal process to identify an individual's vocational potential. Consumers range from school-aged youth to older adults who are making career decisions or vocational transitions. The vocational evaluation and assessment professional provides services to measure, observe, and document an individual's interests, values, temperaments, work-related behaviors, aptitudes, skills, physical capacities, learning style and training needs.

The foundation of vocational evaluation and assessment is that all human assessment should be holistic and humanistic.

A holistic approach encompasses issues of diversity, all relevant attributes of the individual, his/her existing or potential environments (ecologies), and the interactions between the individual and the environments.

A humanistic approach to vocational evaluation and assessment requires consumer involvement, and processes that are designed and implemented to benefit the individual served, with an emphasis on individual capabilities rather than disability. Further, the environment should fit the individual rather than the individual adjusting to fit the vocational environment.

Guiding Principles

**The following seven principles serve as guides to best practice across settings.**

**1** A variety of methods, tools and approaches should be used to provide accurate vocational evaluation and assessments. A broad range of questions must be posed to determine what makes an individual, as well as his/her abilities and needs, unique. Separating an individual's attributes into categories, such as interest, aptitude or learning style preferences, help organize assessment.

**2** Vocational evaluation and assessment information should be verified using different methods, tools and approaches. Using alternative methods or approaches to validate findings can usually be achieved by:

- observing an individual's demonstrated or manifested behaviors, such as performances on actual work;
- using an individual's self report or expressed statements; and/or

- administering some type of survey, inventory, structured interview or test.

**3** Behavioral observation is essential in any vocational assessment process. Behavioral observation (e.g., observing physical performance, social characteristics, interactions with people and other aspects of the environment) occurs throughout the assessment process.

The observation process can be:

- informal or formal;
- occur in a variety of environments;
- made by a variety of people; and
- should be documented and presented in an objective, non-biased manner.

**4** Vocational evaluation and assessment may be an on-going and developmental process in career development. However, individuals, especially those with disabilities, may need evaluations/assessments of varying degrees given at different junctures over their career lifespan.

**5** Vocational evaluation and assessment should be an integral part of larger service delivery systems. Vocational evaluation and assessment should be the basis for planning needed services, resources and support. Therefore, it can be an integral part of the total service delivery system. Vocational evaluation and assessment information should be interpreted and conveyed to the consumer as well as others within the system.

**6** Vocational evaluation and assessment requires the collection of input from a variety of individuals and requires an understanding of how to use the results of the assessment process. An interdisciplinary team approach allows for the effective use of information which can be translated into effective planning, implementation activities (e.g. placements, support service, counseling) and fulfilled vocational development for consumers.

**7** Vocational evaluation and assessment should be current, valid and relevant. Vocational evaluation and assessment is grounded in career, vocational and work contexts.

## Competencies

The Interdisciplinary Council on Vocational Evaluation and Assessment strongly recommends that all individuals providing vocational evaluation and assessment service demonstrate competency or successful completion of training in competencies related to each of the guiding principles identified in this document. They include the following:

1. The ability to select, adopt and/or develop methods and approaches which are useful in determining an individual's attributes, abilities and needs.

2. The ability to utilize alternative methods and approaches which can be used to cross-validate information generated from other assessment sources.
3. The ability to conduct formal and/or informal behavioral observation strategies which can be integrated in a variety of settings.
4. The ability to collect and interpret ongoing data that can be utilized to promote successful transition through critical junctures of the individual's career development.
5. The ability to interpret vocational evaluation and assessment data in a manner that contributes to the total service delivery system. Vocational evaluation and assessment team members must be capable of synthesizing and reporting formal and informal data in a manner that promotes appropriate planning, appropriate goal setting, and coordination of needed support services.
6. The ability to function as an effective participant on an interdisciplinary team.
7. The ability to select, implement and integrate evaluation and assessment approaches which are current, valid, reliable, and grounded in career, vocational and work contexts.

The Interdisciplinary Council on Vocational Evaluation and Assessment will work with its member organizations to implement the principles outlined in this document. We believe an interdisciplinary approach to vocational evaluation and assessment encourages the involvement of a team of professionals, practitioners, and consumers. Hence, individual roles and certification criteria should be met according to the specific service area. The vocational evaluation and assessment specialist who has in depth training in vocational evaluation and assessment is an essential team member.

The Council affirms its commitment to the stated mission, goals and objectives, and its dedication to proactively support consumers and service providers in responding to the challenges of current economic conditions, new legislative mandates, changing demographics and changing service delivery systems. Increased consumer input will guide provision of services.

rev.  
10/93  
10/95

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