

Career Management Code of Conduct: Telephone and Internet Service

Rationale

The rapid growth of the Internet worldwide has opened up a new world of online career assessments and applications but with it a raft of ethical issues has emerged. Further, the Internet is constructed of a global network of largely unsupervised computer servers, hence the implementation and monitoring of professional standards is somewhat problematic. Web-based applications have given rise to the use of more telephone based interventions to support online programs and assessments as clients can now access these programs almost from any location that has internet and computer access. Therefore it is critical, with the growing use of the Internet and modern communication systems, that a specialised code of conduct for online applications and non face-to-face interventions. Career practitioners must be aware of the ethical issues in using these mediums and ensure that their clients benefit from their use, rather than be disadvantaged by them including their right to equality. Not all of the issues are easily solved particularly as Internet applications in career development are an evolving medium. However below is a list of major ethical and considerations that career practitioners should be aware of in service delivery.

Code of Conduct:

- Recognise the limitations of technology and the possible impacts of clients and assessment results,
- Recognise that familiarity or lack thereof with the Internet may handicap some clients and skew results and limit participation. Supply a clear statement to clients of the minimum requirements that must be met to take the test or use the program. Prescreen clients where possible to mitigate this issue,
- Be aware that some clients may be adversely affected by technophobia and when applying online career assessments and dealing with clients over the telephone. Additionally, age and gender may also combine with this phenomenon to create further biases. Career practitioners should be acutely aware that these issues may lead to erroneous results and lead to ineffective or even harmful interventions,
- Equally career practitioners should be aware of cultural differences (e.g.: language barriers) and the impact that these differences may have on the validity of assessment results. Websites should clearly indicate the cultural group for which the assessment is intended,
- Career practitioners should recognise that the storing of digital data on servers and personal computers has implications for maintaining the privacy rights of their clients. This includes consideration of basic security including who has access to client files and results and ensuring confidentiality and the proper use of the data collected,
- Career practitioners must ensure that a clients assessment data must only be used for the purposes that it was intended and consented to by the client,
- Career practitioners must take measures to ensure that the person taking the test is in fact the actual person for which the test was intended. For example, this may be achieved through personal supervision or use of video Web cams,
- It is important to have backup procedures in the event of technical failures so that clients are not disadvantaged in these circumstances e.g.: a back up power supply in the event of power failures etc,
- It is critical that career practitioners observe copyright laws in online applications just as in paper and pencil assessments,
- Webbased career programs and telephone interventions require specific training and skills. Career practitioners need to complete training programs that provide these skills and keep them up to date as technology advancements provide new applications. Similarly, it is essential that only qualified test administrators administer tests,
- Conventional assessments and face-to-face interventions are usually provided in standardised environments. Web based career programs and assessment and telephone interventions are usually completed remotely and therefore in non-standardised settings. Career practitioners should make their clients aware of the impact this may have on test results and other implications of a non-standardised setting,
- Career practitioners should ensure that online assessments (paper based as well) have construct validity and reliability. Career practitioners should be aware that the Internet has the potential to promote and distribute invalid and unreliable tests. Similarly, career practitioners should ensure that they using updated tests and not superceded ones,
- Career practitioners should be aware that not all clients have equal access to technology and the Internet,



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- Career practitioners should be aware that there is less or no opportunity to lessen client anxiety in completing assessments and participating in online assessments and participating in telephone interventions as opposed to face to face situations (Web cam and Video conferencing where affordable and accessible can help overcome this issue),
- To protect their client's privacy and integrity, career practitioners should be aware of the vested commercial interests of business and associated marketing campaigns and ensure that these aspects do not distort or interfere with the integrity of the service offered.

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