



CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT

This *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement* was prepared by the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) Ad Hoc Committee on the Development of a Code of Ethics in 1995:

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This 1995 edition of the *Code* was revised in 2023 by the NCME Standards and Test Use Committee¹ based on recommendations made by the committee.

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As an organization dedicated to the improvement of measurement and evaluation practice in education, NCME adopted the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (Code)* to promote professionally responsible practice in educational measurement. Professionally responsible practice is conduct that arises from either the professional standards of the field, general ethical principles, or both.

The purpose of the *Code* is to guide the conduct of NCME members who are involved in educational assessment activities, broadly conceived, including assessing learning in formal and informal learning environments, inside and outside of schools, and including contexts of measuring learning for employment, certification, and licensure. Some recommendations, however, may pertain primarily to large-scale educational testing. NCME encourages other organizations and individuals who engage in educational assessment activities to endorse and abide by the responsibilities relevant to their professions.

The *Code* applies to most types of assessments that occur as part of the educational process, including formal and informal measures, as well as traditional and alternative techniques for gathering information used in making educational decisions at all levels. While some of the recommendations in this document are specific to large-scale, standardized tests of achievement, many are relevant to other assessment scenarios, such as observational measures and protocols; use of assessment support materials; and psychological, socio-emotional, or school climate/culture measures used in education.

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The *Code* is intended to serve an educational function: to inform and remind those involved in educational assessment of their obligations to act with integrity when developing, using, evaluating, and marketing assessments. Moreover, the *Code* should stimulate thoughtful discussion of what constitutes professionally responsible assessment practice in all educational contexts.

The *Code* enumerates professional responsibilities in eight major areas of assessment activity. Specifically, the *Code* presents the professional responsibilities of those who:

- Develop Assessments
- Market and Sell Assessments
- Select Assessments
- Administer Assessments
- Score Assessments
- Interpret, Use, and Communicate Assessment Results
- Educate Others about Assessment
- Evaluate Programs and Conduct Research with Assessments

Although the *Code* differentiates these activities, they are viewed as highly interrelated, and those who use this *Code* are urged to consider its entirety. The index following the *Code* lists critical interest topics in educational measurement that relate to one or more of the assessment activities.

General Responsibilities

The professional responsibilities described by the *Code* in eight major areas of assessment activity are based on expectations that NCME members involved in educational assessment will:

- protect the health and safety of all examinees, including their psychological and emotional well-being;
- be knowledgeable about, and behave in compliance with local, national, and international laws relevant to the conduct of professional activities;
- maintain and improve their professional competence in educational assessment;
- provide assessment services only in areas of their competence and experience, affording full disclosure of their professional qualifications;
- promote the understanding of sound assessment practices in education;
- adhere to the highest standards of conduct and promote professionally responsible conduct within educational institutions and agencies that provide educational services; and
- perform all professional responsibilities with honesty, integrity, due care, and fairness.

Responsible professional practice includes being informed about and acting in accordance with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014), the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* (Joint Committee on Testing Practices, 2004), or subsequent revisions, as well as all applicable local, national, and international laws and policies that may govern the development, administration, and use of assessments. Both the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* and the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* are intended to establish criteria for judging the technical adequacy of tests and the appropriate uses of tests and test results. The purpose of the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement* is to describe the professional responsibilities of individuals engaged in educational assessment activities. As would be expected, there is a strong relationship between professionally responsible practice and sound educational assessments, and this *Code* is intended to be consistent with the relevant parts of both of these documents.

It is not the intention of NCME to enforce the professional responsibilities stated in the *Code* or to investigate alleged violations of the *Code*.

SECTION 1: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO DEVELOP ASSESSMENT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Those who develop assessment products and services have a professional responsibility to produce assessments that are of the highest quality. Persons who develop assessments have a professional responsibility to:

- 1.1 Ensure that assessment products and services are developed to meet applicable professional, technical, and legal standards.
- 1.2 Develop assessment products and services that elicit evidence of the measured constructs similarly for all examinees regardless of characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, age, or national origin.
- 1.3 Develop assessments using Universal Design principles to ensure accessibility while minimizing impacts to the measured constructs. This includes, for example, providing appropriate accommodations for test takers with disabilities or, when language proficiency is not the target construct for measurement, accommodations for limited proficiency in the language of the assessment.
- 1.4 Disclose to appropriate parties any actual or potential conflicts of interest that might influence the developers' judgment or conduct.
- 1.5 Use copyrighted materials in assessment products and services in accordance with local, national, and international laws.
- 1.6 In a technical manual, make information available about the steps taken to develop and score the assessment, including up-to-date information about reliability, validity, scoring and reporting processes, and other relevant characteristics of the assessment.
- 1.7 To the extent possible, technical information should be communicated with explanations appropriate for expected audiences.
- 1.8 Ensure the protection of privacy and security of personally identifiable information throughout the assessment process, including when developing mechanisms for test registration, administration, and score reporting.
- 1.9 Develop score reports and support materials that promote appropriate and intended interpretations and uses of assessment results.
- 1.10 In clear and prominent language, describe the purpose of the assessment and caution users against the most likely misinterpretations and misuses of assessment results.
- 1.11 Avoid false or unsubstantiated claims about an assessment or the interpretations and uses of results in test preparation and program support materials.
- 1.12 Correct any substantive inaccuracies in assessments or their support materials as soon as possible.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO MARKET AND SELL ASSESSMENT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The marketing of assessment products and services, such as tests and other instruments, scoring services, test preparation services, consulting, and test interpretive services, should be based on information that is accurate, complete, and relevant to those considering their use. Responsibility should be shared across teams. For example, psychometricians should ensure accurate representations of the technical qualities of assessments, and sales and marketing colleagues should be informed about this information prior to engaging with clients. Persons who market and sell assessment products and services have a professional responsibility to:

- 2.1 Provide accurate information to potential purchasers about assessment products and services and their recommended uses and limitations.
- 2.2 Inform potential users of known inappropriate uses of assessment products and services and provide recommendations about how to avoid such misuses.
- 2.3 Maintain a current understanding about their offered assessment products and services and their appropriate uses in education.
- 2.4 Not knowingly withhold relevant information about assessment products and services that might affect an appropriate selection decision.
- 2.5 Base all claims about assessment products and services on valid interpretations of information that is made publicly available.
- 2.6 Allow qualified users equal opportunity to purchase assessment products and services.
- 2.7 Maintain reasonable fees for assessment products and services.
- 2.8 Communicate to potential users, in advance of any purchase or use, all applicable fees associated with assessment products and services.
- 2.9 Strive to ensure that no individuals are denied access to opportunities or benefits derived from assessment results because of their inability to pay the fees for assessment products and services.
- 2.10 Establish criteria for the sale of assessment products and services, such as limiting the sale of assessment products and services to qualified individuals who are likely to use the assessment and interpret results as intended.
- 2.11 Release information implying endorsement by users of assessment products and services only with the users' permission.
- 2.12 Avoid making claims that assessment products and services have been endorsed by another organization unless an official endorsement has been obtained.
- 2.13 Avoid marketing test preparation products and services that may cause individuals to receive scores that misrepresent their actual levels of attainment.

SECTION 3: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO SELECT ASSESSMENT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Those who select assessment products and services for use in educational settings, or help others do so, have important professional responsibilities to make sure that the assessments are appropriate for their intended uses. Persons who select assessment products and services should, at minimum, attempt to:

- 3.1 Involve stakeholders who understand the measurement concepts required to evaluate assessment products and services.
- 3.2 Conduct a thorough review and evaluation of available assessment strategies and instruments that might be valid for the intended uses.
- 3.3 Use fair and consistent criteria when comparing assessments (e.g., an evaluation rubric), such as when evaluating responses to a request for proposals (RFP).
- 3.4 Recommend and/or select assessments based on publicly available evidence of technical quality and utility rather than on unsubstantiated claims or statements.
- 3.5 Disclose any associations or affiliations they have with the authors, test publishers, or others involved with the assessments under consideration for purchase. Refrain from participation if such associations might affect the objectivity of the selection process.
- 3.6 Immediately disclose any attempts by others to exert undue influence on the assessment selection process.
- 3.7 Inform decision makers and prospective users of the appropriateness of the assessment for the intended uses, likely consequences of use, protection of examinee rights, relative costs, materials

and services needed to conduct or use the assessment, and known limitations of the assessment, including potential misuses and misinterpretations of assessment results.

- 3.8 Comply with all security policies and procedures that may accompany assessments being reviewed (e.g., nondisclosure agreements for assessment content).
- 3.9 Recommend against the use of any prospective assessment that is likely to be administered, scored, and used in an unintended or inappropriate way.
- 3.10 Not engage in practices that are likely to cause the artificial inflation of scores.

SECTION 4: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO ADMINISTER ASSESSMENTS

Those who prepare individuals to take assessments and those who are directly or indirectly involved in the administration of assessments as part of the educational process, including teachers, administrators, and assessment personnel, have an important role in making sure that the assessments are administered in a fair and appropriate manner. Persons who prepare others for assessments and those who administer assessments have a professional responsibility to:

- 4.1 Inform the examinees about the assessment prior to its administration, including its purposes, uses, and consequences; how the assessment will be judged or scored; how the results will be kept on file; who will have access to the results; how the results will be distributed; and examinees' rights before, during, and after the assessment.
- 4.2 Administer only those assessments for which they are qualified by education, training, licensure, or certification.
- 4.3 Take appropriate precautions before, during, and after the administration of the assessment to protect the security of assessment content and to prevent cheating.
- 4.4 Understand the assessment administration procedures prior to administration.
- 4.5 Prior to the administration of a computer-based assessment, check that the testing devices meet system requirements, that network bandwidth requirements are met, that all necessary software is installed, and that all available system readiness checks have been conducted.
- 4.6 Administer standardized assessments according to prescribed procedures and conditions and notify appropriate persons if any irregularities occur.
- 4.7 Provide testing opportunities for all eligible examinees. For example, examinees should not be excluded for reasons such as the expectation of poor performance.
- 4.8 Avoid any conditions in the administration of the assessment that might invalidate the results.
- 4.9 Provide for and document all reasonable and allowable accommodations for the administration of the assessment to persons with documented disabilities or special needs.
- 4.10 If appropriate, provide practice testing opportunities so that examinees can become familiar with the content and format of the assessment, particularly if the administration occurs in an unfamiliar mode such as a computer-based testing platform.
- 4.11 Provide reasonable opportunities for individuals to ask questions about the assessment procedures or directions prior to and at prescribed times during the administration of the assessment.
- 4.12 Protect the rights to privacy and due process of those who are assessed.
- 4.13 Avoid actions or conditions that would permit or encourage individuals or groups to receive scores that misrepresent their actual levels of attainment.

SECTION 5: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO SCORE ASSESSMENTS

The scoring of educational assessments should be conducted properly and efficiently so that the results are reported accurately and in a timely manner to users such as examinees, parents, educators, and other stakeholders. Persons who score assessments and prepare data for score reports have a professional responsibility to:

- 5.1 Provide complete and accurate information to users about how the assessment is scored, such as the reporting schedule; scoring process; rationale for the scoring approach; technical characteristics; quality control procedures; reporting formats; and the fees, if any, for these services.
- 5.2 Ensure the integrity of the scoring process for constructed-response tasks by conducting reasonable quality control procedures, including scorer qualification checks before scoring, monitoring scorer agreement and accuracy during scoring, and conducting a final evaluation after scoring.
- 5.3 Minimize the effect on scoring of factors irrelevant to the purposes of the assessment.
- 5.4 Inform users promptly of any deviation in the planned scoring and reporting service or schedule and negotiate a solution with users.
- 5.5 Provide corrected score results to the examinee or the client as quickly as practicable should errors be found that may affect the inferences made on the basis of the scores.
- 5.6 Protect the confidentiality of information that identifies individuals as prescribed by local, national, and international laws.
- 5.7 Release summary results of the assessment only to those persons entitled to such information by local, national, or international laws or those who are designated by the party contracting for the scoring services.
- 5.8 Establish, where feasible, a fair and reasonable process for appealing assessment results and rescoring assessment responses.

SECTION 6: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO INTERPRET, USE, AND COMMUNICATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The interpretation, use, and communication of assessment results should promote valid inferences and discourage invalid ones. Persons who interpret, use, and communicate assessment results have a professional responsibility to:

- 6.1 Interpret, use, and communicate assessment results in an informed, objective, and fair manner with consideration given to the assessment's limitations and with an understanding of the potential consequences of use.
- 6.2 Provide to those who receive assessment results information about the assessment, its purposes, its limitations, and its uses necessary for the proper interpretation of the results.
- 6.3 Provide to those who receive score reports a written description of all reported scores in language that is easy to understand, including proper interpretations and likely misinterpretations.
- 6.4 Communicate to appropriate audiences the results of the assessment in a timely manner.
- 6.5 Evaluate and communicate the adequacy and appropriateness of any norms or performance standards used in the interpretation of assessment results.
- 6.6 Inform parties involved in the assessment process about how assessment results may affect them.
- 6.7 Use multiple sources and types of relevant information about persons or programs whenever possible when making educational decisions.
- 6.8 Avoid making, and actively discourage others from making, inaccurate reports, unsubstantiated claims, inappropriate interpretations, or otherwise false and misleading statements about assessment results.

- 6.9 Disclose to examinees and others whether and how long the results of the assessment will be kept on file, procedures for appeal and rescoring, rights examinees and others have to the assessment information, and how those rights may be exercised.
- 6.10 Report any apparent misuses of assessment information to those responsible for the assessment process.
- 6.11 Protect the rights to privacy of individuals and institutions involved in the assessment process.

SECTION 7: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO EDUCATE OTHERS ABOUT ASSESSMENT

The process of educating others about educational assessment, whether as part of higher education, professional development, public policy discussions, or job training, should prepare individuals to understand and engage in sound measurement practice and to become discerning users of tests and test results. Persons who educate or inform others about assessment have a professional responsibility to:

- 7.1 Remain competent and current in the areas in which they teach and reflect that in their instruction.
- 7.2 Provide fair and balanced perspectives when teaching about assessment.
- 7.3 Communicate assessment principles and concepts with a degree of technical detail appropriate for the audience.
- 7.4 Differentiate clearly between substantiated knowledge and expressions of opinion when educating others about any specific assessment method, product, or service.
- 7.5 Disclose any financial interests that might be perceived to influence the evaluation of a particular assessment product or service that is the subject of instruction.
- 7.6 Teach the consequences of administering any assessment or reporting assessment results, whether for evaluation or other instructional purposes, if that activity poses potential harm to any examinee.
- 7.7 Protect the security of proprietary assessments and materials used in the instructional process.
- 7.8 Model responsible assessment practice, align instruction with students' educational and career goals, and help those receiving instruction to learn about their professional responsibilities in educational measurement.
- 7.9 Provide fair and balanced perspectives on assessment issues being discussed by policymakers, parents, and other citizens.

SECTION 8: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO EVALUATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH ASSESSMENTS

Conducting research with assessments—either for program evaluation, educational intervention research, or learning about the assessment itself—is a key activity in helping improve understanding of assessments and educational programs. Persons who engage in the evaluation of educational programs or conduct research with assessments have a professional responsibility to:

- 8.1 Conduct evaluation and research activities in an informed, objective, and fair manner.
- 8.2 Comply with applicable standards for protecting the rights of participants in an evaluation or research study, including the rights to privacy and informed consent.
- 8.3 If gathering data with human subjects in an educational research setting, obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption prior to conducting the research.
- 8.4 Disclose any associations they have with authors, test publishers, or others involved with the assessment and refrain from participation if such associations might affect the objectivity of the research or evaluation.

- 8.5 In evaluation or intervention research, select or develop assessments measuring constructs that are clearly aligned with the goals of the program or intervention (e.g., the assessment should be sensitive to the possible effects of the intervention).
- 8.6 Whether using an established assessment or developing one, report information about reliability and validity based on data from the study.
- 8.7 Preserve the security of all assessments to ensure that research or evaluation results can be interpreted as valid indicators of the effectiveness of a program or intervention.
- 8.8 Take appropriate steps to minimize potential sources of invalidity in the research design or assessment results and disclose known factors that may bias the results of the study (e.g., learning or practice effects due to taking an assessment multiple times).
- 8.9 Present the results of research, both intended and unintended, in a fair, complete, and objective manner.
- 8.10 Attribute completely and appropriately the work and ideas of others.
- 8.11 Qualify the conclusions of the research within the limitations of the study.
- 8.12 Whenever possible, use multiple sources of relevant information to conduct evaluation and research.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

The following list of resources is provided for those who want to seek additional information about codes of professional responsibility that have been developed and adopted by organizations having an interest in various aspects of educational assessment:

Ackerman, T. A., Bandalos, D. L., Briggs, D. C., Everson, H. T., Ho, A. D., Lottridge, S. M., Madison, M. J., Sinharay, S., Rodriguez, M. C., Russell, M., von Davier, A. A., & Wind, S. A. (2023). Foundational competencies in educational measurement. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 0(0), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/emip.12581>

American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics*. <https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics#2014code>

American Educational Research Association. (2011). *Code of ethics*. [https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/docs/About_AERA/CodeOfEthics\(1\).pdf](https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/docs/About_AERA/CodeOfEthics(1).pdf)

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. <https://www.testingstandards.net/open-access-files.html>

American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education, & National Education Association. (1990). *Standards for teacher competence in educational assessment of students*. <https://buros.org/standards-teacher-competence-educational-assessment-students>

American Psychological Association. (2017). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/ethics-code-2017.pdf>

American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education. (1993). *Learner-centered psychological principles: Guidelines for school redesign and reform*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED371994.pdf>

Joint Advisory Committee. (1993). *Principles for fair assessment practices for education in Canada*.
<https://www.wcdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2017/03/fairstudent.pdf>

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Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. (2009). *The personnel evaluation standards: How to assess systems for evaluating educators*. Sage.

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Lenz, A. S., Ault, H., Balkin, R. S., Minton, C. B., Erford, B. T., Hays, D. G., Kim, B. S. K., & Li, C. (2022). Responsibilities of users of standardized tests (RUST-4E). *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 55(4), 227–235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481756.2022.2052321>

National Association of College Admission Counseling. (2016). *Statement of principles of good practice*.
<https://www.csueastbay.edu/admissions/files/docs/nacac-principles.pdf>

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