

# Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education

## Janet E. Wall

### Abstract:

*The Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education has been endorsed by the governing bodies of seven member organizations of the Joint Committee on Testing Practices. This document was written to guide both test developers and test users in the fair and appropriate use of tests in education.*

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Career development professionals often use assessments to help individuals know about themselves and their characteristics in order to make connections between person characteristics and related occupation characteristics. Typically, instruments involve interest inventories, work values assessment, personality inventories, and assessments measuring abilities and skills. Assessments, although useful, can be appropriately or inappropriately selected, used, and interpreted.

To better assure proper assessment use, many associations have prepared guidelines, standards, and ethics statements to assist practitioners in maintaining a professional level of quality in the use of assessments. These standards and guidelines are best summarized in a chapter titled Applications of Professional Ethics in Educational Assessment prepared by Dr. Pat Nellor Wickwire (2004) in a book called Measuring Up: Assessment Issues for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators. Many of these guidelines and ethics statements are reproduced in full in a CD anthology accompanying the book.

As an example of professional standards guiding test development and use, the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing was published by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council for Measurement (NCME) in Education in 1999. This document is often thought of as the bible for test developers. As a result, it is geared primarily for test developers, researchers, and psychometricians. These standards are not easily interpretable by educational practitioners such as teachers, school counselors and career counselors.

To assist the practitioner, a working group of the Joint Committee on Testing Practices (JCTP) prepared the Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (Code). The purpose of the Code was to develop user-friendly and understandable guidelines based on the Standards. Recently, all the JCTP member associations have formally endorsed the Code, including the American Counseling Association, and it has been made available to all interested parties. The JCTP is a group comprised of representatives of the American Counseling Association, AERA, APA, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, National Association of School Psychologists, National Association of Test Directors, and NCME. The JCTP activities and goals are best described in an article by Dr. Lara Frumkin (2004). During the production of the Code, extensive input was solicited and obtained over many months. Presentations

were made and symposia were conducted at several national conferences. Copies of the Code draft were submitted to various professional organizations for comment. Broad input was solicited via posting the Code draft and an input form on the JCTP website. The Code addresses the roles of test developers and test users in four critical areas using 31 major statements in the areas of:

- Developing and Selecting Appropriate Tests
- Administering and Scoring Tests
- Reporting and Interpreting Test Results
- Informing Test Takers

Parallel statements are provided for both the test developer and the test user. A few example statements include:

Test Developers	Test Users
Provide evidence of what the test measures, the recommended uses, the intended test takers, and the strengths and limitations of the test, including the level of precision of the test scores.	Define the purpose for testing, the content and skills to be tested, and the intended test takers. Select and use the most appropriate test based on a thorough review of available information.
Make appropriately modified forms of tests or administration procedures available for test takers with disabilities who need special accommodations.	Select tests with appropriately modified forms or administration procedures for test takers with disabilities who need special accommodations.
Provide clear descriptions of detailed procedures for administering tests in a standardized manner.	Follow established procedures for administering tests in a standardized manner.

Single printed copies of the Code can be obtained by making a request to [mernesto@apa.org](mailto:mernesto@apa.org) or [sagesolutions@earthlink.net](mailto:sagesolutions@earthlink.net) or through a written request to the JCTP, Science Directorate, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242. Provide your name and mailing address. The Code can be also be downloaded from <http://www.home.earthlink.net/~sagesolutions>. The Code may be reproduced in whole or in part without fees or permission, provided that acknowledgment is made to the JCTP. Reproduction and dissemination of this document are encouraged. Please cite this document as follows: Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education. (2004). Washington, DC: Joint Committee on Testing Practices.

**References:**

Frumkin, L. (2004). The joint committee on testing practices: Available publications on testing: In J. Wall & G. Walz (Eds.), *Measuring up: assessment issues for teachers, counselors and administrators* (pp. 745-755). Austin, TX: Pro Ed, Inc.  
 Nellor Wickwire, P. (2004). Applications of professional ethics in educational assessment: In J. Wall & G. Walz (Eds.), *Measuring up: assessment issues for teachers, counselors and administrators* (pp. 439-362). Austin, TX: Pro Ed, Inc.

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