

AT and Accommodations Checklist

How well do vocational evaluation and assessment programs make use of assistive technology (AT) resources and services? Are accommodations needed by consumers being provided during the evaluation process? When should assistive technology resource and services be used? Who is expected to provide AT services?

These and many other questions should be asked by vocational evaluators and managers of vocational assessment programs who want their services to be responsive to consumer needs, of greatest value to referral sources, and be beneficial to employers. Consideration of assistive technology and accommodation possibilities in key components common to almost all comprehensive assessment processes will benefit consumers, referral sources and employers. These components or phases include:

- ❖ Pre-Evaluation Preparation;
- ❖ Initial Interview;
- ❖ Evaluation Planning;
- ❖ Assessment Tasks and Activities;
- ❖ Career Exploration Activities; and
- ❖ Findings and Recommendations.

Assistive technology assessment can be conducted before, after or as part of comprehensive vocational assessments. AT assessments that are provided prior to vocational evaluations can be useful, however they often lack specific vocational focus which makes them more general. When consideration of assistive technology resources and services, including opportunities for individuals to try out AT or accommodations occur as part of vocational assessments, the greater the benefit will be. With individuals who clearly have extensive technology-related needs, arrangements for a separate AT assessment from a technology specialist will be needed. Whenever possible, linking this technology assessment with the vocational evaluation should be considered.

Each individual's needs will vary depending on living situations, vocational goals, specific tasks and activities, and most important, the attitude of that they may have toward using assistive technology and requesting that accommodations be made by employers. Assistive technology may be best seen as a means to an end that will enable an individual to perform a task or activity, or to perform a task or activity better. Technology can often be the interface between the person and activities that they do in the various environments that are expected to function. When assistive technology resources and accommodation possibilities are factored into vocational assessments and in contacts with employers what individuals are capable of doing can be altered dramatically.

The following questions can be used as a checklist to help determine if adequate emphasis has been given to consideration of assistive technology and accommodation needs in the components or phases of comprehensive vocational assessments.

Pre-Evaluation Preparation

- Were any technology-related services requested in referral information? Yes No
- Are there apparent functional limitations that may require accommodations in order to complete the assessment? Yes No
- Are test materials and instructional booklets that are likely to be used available in appropriate (alternate) formats? Yes No
- Should the case be reviewed with a technology specialist prior to the assessment? Yes No

Notes:

Initial interview

- Does the individual appear to have any need for assistive aids/devices to complete assessment tasks or activities? Yes No
- Has the individual ever used any type of assistive aids or devices or needed accommodations in the past? Yes No
- Has the individual been asked about his/her feelings about using assistive technology or requesting accommodations? Yes No

Notes:

Evaluation Planning

- If need for assistive technology aids/devices was noted, is the necessary equipment available for use? Yes No
- If special accommodations are needed during the assessment process, have these been completed? Yes No
- Will a technology specialist be needed during the evaluation? Yes No

Notes:

Assessment Tasks and Activities

- Have observations of performance and behavior noted any functional difficulties? Yes No
- Is there need for assistive technology or accommodations to the assessment process or environment to maximize performance? Yes No
- Were performance results analyzed to determine if AT or accommodations could improve performance? Yes No
- If needed, does the individual have the opportunity to use or tryout AT aids/devices or accommodations during the assessment? Yes No

Notes:

Career Exploration Activities

- Were worker requirements and job demands for prospective placement options analyzed? Yes No
- If the individual wishes to return to a previous job, were essential job functions identified and, if necessary, accommodations to compensate for loss of function considered? Yes No
- Was the individual able to use AT aids and devices to explore possible career areas? Yes No
- Were prospective employers involved with exploration activities? Yes No

Notes:

Findings and Recommendations

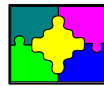
- If job accommodations or AT equipment is needed, have these been fully explained in the final report? Yes No
- If recommendations are made for assistive technology services, are low-tech as well as high tech options clearly indicated? Yes No
- Have cost considerations for accommodations or AT equipment been discussed with the individual, referral agency and the employer? Yes No
- Have the responsibilities for maintenance and equipment replacement needs for all parties involved been addressed? Yes No
- Will additional services from a technology specialist be needed? Yes No

Notes:

Focus on What People Could Be Capable of Doing

Making use of accommodations and assistive technology will help vocational evaluation staffs to better determine what people could be capable of doing. Performance on tests and assessment tools alone can set minimum scores or cut-off point thinking that can unfairly limit consideration of what someone might actually be capable of doing. Perceptions easily can become realities. The traditional role of vocational assessment staffs to primarily test and evaluate is changing. When appropriate accommodations and use of assistive technology are part of the assessment process, it's much more likely that evaluators will be able to point out what someone currently can do and better predict what they could do, given the right tools, resources or accommodations.

Rehabilitation professionals such as vocational evaluators can begin the identification, analysis and problem-solving process by asking basic questions about accommodations and assistive technology resources. When this occurs, a much more effective job can be done to determine what someone could be capable of doing, not only how well they were able to perform on assessment activities at a given point. In many situations a technology specialist will need to be brought into the evaluation and be part of the assessment team. Often however, the vocational evaluator will be able to implement basic accommodations and begin the process of identifying if additional assistive technology resources and services are needed. Regardless of how this is accomplished, assistive technology and accommodation options are key resources that should be an integral part of any comprehensive vocational assessment process.



A. Langton, 11/2005

For more resources on applications of assistive technology in vocational evaluation and rehabilitation services contact:

Pathfinder Associates

Phone: 803.767.8043

E-Mail: Info@pathfinderassociates.net

On the web: www.pathfinderassociates.net