Definition of Career Clusters Assessment

Assessment, within the context of the Career Clusters Initiative, is defined as a measurement of what a learner should know and be able to do. The academic and technical knowledge and skills common to all occupations and pathways within a single cluster are initially addressed in the Career Clusters Initiative. Each cluster measures or assesses a learner’s knowledge and skills related to the cluster.

Purpose of the Protocol for Career Clusters Assessments

The purpose of this document is to provide:
- Minimum criteria for selecting existing assessment instruments that align to the academic and technical knowledge and skills identified for each cluster.
- Minimum criteria for developing new assessment instruments that align to the academic and technical knowledge and skills identified for each cluster.
- Minimum criteria for validating and determining reliability of assessment instruments.

Functions of Career Clusters Assessment

Career Cluster Assessment serves to
- measure (assess) student achievement, both cognitive and performance, in areas of academic and technical knowledge and skills for each cluster
- provide the basis for a transportable, industry-endorsed certification.

Operational Guidelines for Career Clusters Assessment

This protocol includes minimum criteria/expectations career cluster designers need to apply in the selection/development of assessment modalities. Career clusters assessment:

CONTENT
- measures all 10 Foundation knowledge and skills.
- customizes context of questions and applications to individual clusters.
- reflects a high degree of specificity of measurable knowledge and skills.
- aligns to academic standards.
- connects to post high school standards and competencies.
- is consistent with Perkins data-quality criteria.

FORM
- combines a minimum of two modalities: cognitive and performance.
- includes an item bank that can accommodate multiple applications.
- reflects quality design and clear formats.

APPLICATIONS AND USES
- offers diagnostic feedback to the learner.
- provides added value to the user (employer, post high school); not required for employment.
- affords portability of results.
- provides cues for instruction.
ADMINISTRATION

• validates identity of test takers through a secure system.
• affords flexible administration, e.g. single assessment per foundation cluster topic or combination of topics.
• provides flexible timing for administration.
• affords no cost or low cost to students.
• includes an affordable, user-friendly process to cover administrative costs.
• reflects an administration process that is as consistent as possible with other career cluster assessments.
• includes an affordable, user-friendly maintenance process.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

• uses consistent, reliable, and technically strong elements.
• is recognized by business and industry.
• is recognized by post high school education and training.