

Assessment Link Instructional Note

Assessment Link connects the occupations, occupation categories, or personality types or other assessment results from common assessment instruments to occupations in CIS. There are many reasons people take career assessments—to find new possibilities, to provide context for career planning, and to consider occupations through the variety of lenses in which occupations can be defined. Ultimately, the purpose of a career assessment is to learn about the self, the strengths, values, interests, skills, and characteristics that are important to an individual. Using career assessments can be a very powerful experience. In general, people take, score, and then interpret the assessment with guidance from a career development professional. (Note: See *Setting the Stage for Using Formal Career Assessment Instruments* for more information on preparing students and clients for those steps.) Once those critical steps have occurred, the next action is for a student or client to apply their results.



The final and most essential step in using an assessment instrument is to connect its results to information about the occupations it suggests. The heart of CIS is information; information is what students and clients access when they use Assessment Link. Those who use CIS to research occupations, programs of study, and schools access accurate, current, understandable, unbiased, comprehensive, and well-integrated information.

Hallmarks of CIS Information

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make thoughtful decisions without accurate information. In general, people become informed about a topic by:

- talking with others (talking with an aunt about her job)
- reading information (reading a local employer's brochure, surfing the Internet)
- experiencing something (participating in a job shadow)
- studying a topic in a course setting (taking a career and technical education course related to agriculture)

While these resources are useful and informative, they can provide a limited vision of available options. Sometimes resources can be detrimental to informed planning if the information provided is biased, inaccurate, or outdated. A good first step is to introduce students and clients to CIS so that additional information is placed in context of a good, accurate information base.

CIS serves as a career development resource, which means analysts and educators have synthesized data from a variety of sources and crafted it to meet the needs of people planning a transition or in the process of evaluating their current career situation. This allows the data to be comparable, unbiased, and meaningful for people in a variety of situations: students forecasting their high school courses; clients planning how to advance within an industry; adults evaluating whether their current occupations are satisfying; college students considering if the colleges they currently attend will meet their needs. CIS has spent significant time establishing criteria for how and why we modify the data to meet what we consider “good” information. The following are the criteria we use:

- **ACCURATE** - Information that is true, verifiable and not deceptive. Accurate career information is based on empirical data and can be validated by comparing sources or checking for internal consistency.
- **CURRENT** - Information that is applicable to the present time. Keeping information current requires a process of eliminating the old and adding the new. While some types of information are more perishable than others, it is generally accepted that occupation and education information should be reviewed and updated annually to be current.
- **RELEVANT** - Relevant information applies to the interests of the individuals who use it for the decisions they are facing. It should reduce a person's uncertainties about work and education while facilitating choice and planning. Since we live and work in local labor markets rather than in national ones, the better description of local conditions, the more relevant it is to us. Therefore, state and local information is usually more valuable than national.
- **SPECIFIC** - For information to be specific, it must contain concrete facts. General observations are often interesting and can provide a background for further analysis, but specific facts are essential to realistic planning and decision making.
- **UNDERSTANDABLE** - People using information must be able to comprehend it before they can use it. Data must be analyzed and converted into words. The content of the message should avoid ambiguities and be informative to the intended audience.
- **COMPREHENSIVE** - The information should include all the important categories within its scope of coverage. For CIS that includes the full range of occupational opportunities, their related educational programs of study and training, and the schools that offer them as the core. Related to that is information about money for school, looking for work, employers and industries, working for yourself, and so on.
- **UNBIASED** - This characteristic is about the motivation or purpose for which the information is being produced and delivered. It is unbiased when the individual or organization delivering the information has no vested interest in the decisions or plans of the people who are receiving the information.
- **COMPARABLE** - The information presented should be of uniform collection, analysis, content, and format so that a user of the information can compare and contrast the various occupation, program of study, and school files.

Many students and clients do not know how to evaluate information resources. As they apply their career assessment results using Assessment Link, encourage them to evaluate what they consider "good" information. Realistic career and education plans require usable information. As individuals, we are continually searching for facts about where we might work and how we might live. CIS can provide a foundation to help people make informed and thoughtful decisions that can help people live successful and satisfying lives.