IAEVG
Ethical Guidelines

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance

The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) provides global leadership in and advocates for guidance by promoting ethical, socially just, and best practices throughout the world so that educational, vocational, and career guidance and counselling is available to all citizens from competent and qualified practitioners.

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Content

PREAMBLE

The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) is committed to the global provision of educational, vocational, and career guidance by competent and recognised professionals. IAEVG members value the dignity, freedom, and integrity of people in making lifelong learning, work, and career decisions. Relevant at all ages, people anticipate, prepare for, enter into, face, and cope with the changing dynamics of society, the labour market, and workplaces. Social justice is a foundation for supporting clients and the public, and for shaping the organisational structures in which members deliver educational and guidance services.

IAEVG members recognise that educational and vocational decisions, and career development have an impact reaching beyond the individual, to families, communities, and the larger society and environment. National and global economies, cultural traditions and contexts, and the structure of the labour market all influence opportunities and constraints related to career directions, decisions, livelihoods, and sustainable careers. Thus, IAEVG members play key roles in influencing social discourses in their work environments and networks that shape the nature of policies, services, theories, guidance tools and techniques, and resources available to clients and the public. With the rapid advance of technology and the increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational, vocational, and career guidance, members must also consider its ethical implications, including fairness, transparency, equity, and the protection of client autonomy and privacy.

IAEVG members are engaged in an ongoing process of defining and redefining the services, goals, and targets of organisations concerned with educational, vocational, and career guidance. The IAEVG Ethical Guidelines support members' professional practice and clients´ entitlement to quality services.

Framework for Ethical Practice

Ethics are the morals and principles that guide practitioners' decision-making, actions, and professional practice. IAEVG members have a responsibility to protect their clients, the profession, and other professionals, and the IAEVG Ethical Guidelines are a reference and resource to guide professional conduct in practice.

The IAEVG Ethical Guidelines support members in their professional practice with the people they serve and work with. IAEVG members agree to the conscious and intentional application of ethical standards of conduct in practice.

The Guidelines provide a reference for:

(a) making ethical decisions and actions as individual practitioners,

(b) planning organisational policies and services,

(c) informing the public of expected standards of professional practice and behaviour,

(d) providing evaluative criteria for self-assessments, peer evaluation, and supervision to ensure quality standards in service provision, and

(e) seeking organisational support for professional development.

The Ethical Guidelines identify minimal goals for ethical behaviour and may stimulate IAEVG members' professional development. The IAEVG is an international association, so the guidelines cannot address every possible ethical dilemma that IAEVG members experience in their national or cultural contexts. Members are thus encouraged to use the guidelines to inform the creation of ethical guidelines in their professional associations and in their local and national contexts.

The Ethical Guidelines are structured in six broad sections outlined below, specifically:

1) Ethical responsibilities to clients

2) Ethical responsibilities to colleagues and professional associates

3) Ethical responsibilities towards government, employers, community agencies, and community members

4) Ethical responsibilities to theory and research

5) Ethical responsibilities on the use of digital technologies (including AI)

6) Ethical responsibilities to professional learning and development

Figure 1. Structure of IAEVG Ethical Guidelines

Note: In this document, "Digital technologies" refers to all technology-mediated tools, platforms, and systems used in guidance practice, including but not limited to online platforms, social media, mobile applications, web-based tools, ICT systems, telephone services, radio programmes, and artificial intelligence.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

1. Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

a) **Transparency and informed consent:** Clearly explain service goals, methods, and confidentiality limits. Inform clients about data security practices across all service delivery methods, including when using digital technologies.

b) **Avoidance of conflicts of interest:** Disclose any dual roles or relationships that may compromise client interests or professional objectivity.

c) **Respect for dignity and autonomy:** Uphold client dignity, self-direction, and confidentiality.

d) **Holistic approach:** Take into account clients' interconnected educational, vocational, personal, and social situations in an integrated and balanced manner.

e) **Cultural sensitivity and inclusion:** Avoid imposing personal values, respect diversity, and challenge discrimination.

f) **Commitment to social justice:** Advocate for equitable access to educational, vocational, and career guidance services and opportunities.

g) **Opposition to oppression:** Actively challenge discrimination and structural inequalities within the scope of professional practice. Monitor and address algorithmic biases in AI applications.

h) **Professional oversight when using digital technology:** Maintain professional oversight and judgment in all digital technology-assisted services, ensuring that they are grounded in theory and research. Be transparent about the role of digital technologies and make sure clients understand their use and limitations.

i) **Ethical digital technology and AI use:** Ensure responsible and equitable practices to prevent reinforcing inequalities or biases. Address ethical issues, including data validity, security, consent, and algorithmic fairness.

j) **Responsible use of digital technology and AI:** Use validated tools and techniques appropriate for contexts and client needs, with understandable explanations of processes and available follow-up assistance.

k) **Ethical use of assessments:** Use culturally relevant and validated assessments, and explain results clearly. Ensure transparency and accuracy in all assessment practices.

l) **Representation of competence:** Accurately present qualifications and experience, and avoid misleading claims.

m) **Scope of practice and referral:** Work within professional limits, and refer clients when services exceed expertise or where the client presents a danger to themselves or others. Seek supervision from a qualified supervisor when there are doubts about the necessary expertise.

n) **Transparency in independent practice:** Be clear about fees and costs, and respect intellectual property. Ensure that ethical practice takes precedence over financial interests.

2. Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues and Professional Associates

a) **Collaboration and cooperation:** Build strong professional relationships to enhance and provide optimal educational, vocational, and career guidance services.

b) **Transparent service provision**: Inform colleagues about confidentiality, privacy, and data protection requirements, especially when using digital technologies (including AI).

c) **Responsible information sharing:** Share accurate and contextually relevant information while respecting confidentiality. Ensure that AI-generated insights are applied ethically and transparently.

d) **Ethical accountability:** Support the implementation of ethical guidelines and model ethical behaviour in practice.

e) **Address concerns about colleagues' conduct:** Address ethical concerns through direct dialogue or appropriate institutional channels.

f) **Ethical consultation:** Seek confidential support when facing ethical ambiguity—e.g., from supervisors, colleagues, or professional associations.

g) **Consult specialists:** Seek specialist consultation when dilemmas involve unique client populations or digital technologies (including AI).

3. Ethical Responsibilities Towards Government, Employers, Community Agencies, and Community Members

a) **Policy awareness:** Stay informed about relevant national, regional, local, and organisational policies concerning education, youth services, employment, and inclusion that affect guidance practice.

b) **Community engagement:** Collaborate with parents, caregivers, elders, community leaders, professionals, and para-professionals from within and outside career sectors who influence career-related decisions and service access.

c) **Advocacy for equitable access:** Identify barriers and advocate for inclusive policies and practices that ensure adequate access to educational, vocational, and career guidance.

d) **Address digital divides:** Promote equitable access to digital technologies and address algorithmic biases in digital platforms and AI-driven systems.

e) **Public policy engagement:** Promote educational, vocational, and career guidance as comprehensive career development support beyond job placement. Challenge policies that limit service quality or client opportunities.

f) **Promotion of professionalism:** Increase public awareness of the qualifications, ethical standards, skills, and competencies required for high-quality guidance services.

g) **Workplace collaboration:** Collaborate with employers in the development of opportunities, including respectful and safe workplaces that invest in training to enhance employees' career development and professional skills.

h) **Knowledge production and policy contribution:** Participate in research, evaluations, and policy development initiatives that advance the field of educational, vocational, and career guidance.

4. Ethical Responsibilities to Theory and Research

a) **Ethical research practices:** Conduct research using recognised ethical and organisational standards. Ensure confidentiality and obtain informed consent.

b) **Theory and research informed practice:** Apply theoretical and research knowledge to improve services and guidance interventions. Use practice insights to inform and contribute to research and theory development.

c) **Research communication and dissemination:** Share findings in clear and accessible ways with participants, stakeholders, colleagues, associations, policymakers, and the public so that they can understand and apply results. Advance the profession through effective research communication and dissemination.

d) **Digital technology in research:** Follow recognised ethical standards for using digital technologies (including AI) in research.

e) **Active research participation:** Engage in research activities as participants, collaborators, or contributors when appropriate, and foster ongoing collaboration between practitioners and researchers.

5. Ethical Responsibilities on the Use of Digital Technologies (including AI)

a) **Technology tools, assessment, and selection:** Evaluate digital technologies (including AI) for their ethical compliance, effectiveness, and suitability before implementation in guidance practice.

b) **Informed consent and transparency:** Clearly explain how digital technologies (including AI) will be used, obtain explicit consent, and provide clients with the option to decline. Disclose AI use, explain outputs clearly, and clarify system limitations, including potential biases and hallucinations.

c) **Data protection and privacy:** Implement robust data protection measures and ensure that client privacy is maintained.

d) **Professional competence:** Maintain and develop the competencies necessary to use digital technologies (including AI and privacy policies)

responsibly, understanding their capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications.

e) **Professional judgement:** Retain professional responsibility in all educational, vocational, and career guidance services, and avoid undue reliance on automated decision-making.

f) **Digital equity and inclusive access:** Advocate for equitable access to digital technologies and resources. Work to reduce digital divides and prevent the exclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

g) **Bias prevention and fairness:** Monitor for and actively take steps to challenge unfair biases in digital platforms and AI systems.

h) **Digital technology in research:** Ensure the ethical use of digital technologies (including AI) in research, following recognised standards of consent, fairness, and accuracy.

i) **Digital literacy support:** Support clients in developing digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and the ability to evaluate digital and AI-generated information.

j) **Professional collaboration:** Ensure ethical information-sharing and transparency when using digital platforms (including AI) for professional collaboration.

k) **Regulatory compliance:** Align practices and organisational policies with applicable standards, regulations, and governance frameworks.

6. Ethical Responsibilities for Professional Learning and Development

a) **Continuous professional development:** Commit to lifelong learning and maintain professional qualifications through ongoing training and professional development.

b) **Network participation:** Engage in professional networks that shape development opportunities and influence the profession's available resources.

c) **Ethical reflection:** Reflect on personal values and evolving social, cultural, and political contexts that influence professional practice.

d) **Technology and sustainability integration:** Consider how digital technologies can support or harm equity, justice, and sustainability principles.

e) **Competency maintenance:** Maintain up-to-date knowledge of assessment methods, information resources, theories, practices (including technologies), and local, regional, national, and global policies.

f) **Digital competence:** Maintain digital competence and literacy, understand the capabilities and limitations of existing and emerging technologies, remain up-to-date with regulations, and ensure that practice remains client-centred.

g) **Supervision and peer support:** Participate in regular supervision when available, and offer and participate in peer support and consultation when formal supervision is unavailable.

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