# PART C, CHAPTER 6.6: VOCATIONAL DIAGNOSTIC UNIT (VDU) SERVICES

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| **Policy Number** | **Authority** | **Scope** | **Effective Date** |
| Part C, Chapter 6.6 | N/A | All TWC-VR staff, particularly BVI VR Counselors | 9/3/2024 |

## PURPOSE

In accordance with the authority (Federal and State) listed above, this policy is issued by the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Division (TWC-VR). Adherence to these rules and regulations issued under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), supports Texans with disabilities in gaining, maintaining, and advancing in competitive integrated employment (CIE).

Specifically, the purpose of this policy and these procedures is to ensure adherence to the provision of vocational and psychological evaluation for blind and visually impaired customers.

## DEFINITIONS

Informed Choice: The means by which a customer chooses their rehabilitation path, from options based on their needs and circumstances and the TWC-VR rules, as it relates to choosing to participate in VDU services.

## POLICY

### General Overview

TWC-VR ensures that blind or visually impaired (BVI) customers receive tailored vocational evaluations and services that address their specific needs. These specialized services, primarily available through TWC-VR's Vocational Diagnostic Unit (VDU), are designed to meet the unique needs of BVI customers. Standardized test batteries are generally not suitable for the BVI population; therefore, VDU assessments are essential for accurately determining vocational potential. While participation in VDU services is not mandatory, these services significantly contribute to enhancing the independence, productivity, and employment opportunities of BVI customers.

VDU provides tailored assessments based on customer needs, evaluating verbal, cognitive, sensory, motor, independent living, academic, social, and vocational skills, and interests. These assessments utilize standardized instruments, observations, and interviews.

* The Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation System (CVES): Assesses an individual’s vocational abilities, interests, and potential employment barriers through standardized tests, situational evaluations, work samples, and interviews. It considers unique factors for BVI individuals, such as assistive technology needs, orientation and mobility (O&M) skills, and job readiness. CVES helps VR Counselors and customers create effective vocational rehabilitation plans and job placement strategies. Use of the CVES requires certification.
* The Vocational Diagnostic Unit Career Assessment (VDU CA): Includes a psychosocial interview and surveys to evaluate personal, educational, and work history, adaptive behaviors, interests, values, skills, learning style, and job compatibility. It recommends jobs from O\*NET and provides referrals for counseling and resources for self-learning. The assessment can be conducted in-person or remotely.

### Mental and Behavioral Health

VDU does not diagnose or treat behavioral or mental health conditions but may recommend referral to outside providers for diagnosis, treatment, or counseling.

### Additional Policy Considerations

* Comparable Services and Benefits: VDU services are exempt from the requirement to secure comparable services and benefits prior to TWC-VR expending funds.
* Customer Participation in the Cost of Services: VDU services are exempt from applying Basic Living Requirements (BLR) and, therefore, the customer is not required to participate in the cost of services.
* Recipients of Social Security Disability Benefits: Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), due to the customer’s disability, are exempt from the requirement to participate in the cost of TWC-VR services regardless of income.
* Exceptions to Policy: When necessary to meet the VR needs of a customer, TWC-VR staff members may request exceptions to policies and procedures through their chain of management up to the Deputy Division Director of Field Services Delivery, or designee. However, exceptions to policies and procedures based on Federal and State laws, statutes, and rules or regulations are not allowable.

## PROCEDURES

### Determining the Need for VDU Services

Customers who have never been evaluated, seek career guidance, are unsure about their skills or vocational goals, or have experienced significant changes in their condition benefit most from VDU services. VR Counselors and customers must agree on the need for VDU services for them to be provided.

### Referral for VDU Services

VDU provides services in response to service records created by the VR Counselor or Rehabilitation Assistant (RA) and delegated to the VDU diagnostician who covers the customer’s region. The VR Counselor can request that VDU provide a psychological evaluation or a vocational assessment separately or they may request both assessments to be provided at the same time. When the evaluation is scheduled to take place at the VR Counselor’s office, arrangements must be made to secure a private meeting space for the VDU Diagnostician to provide services to the customer uninterrupted for several hours at a time.

To refer a customer to VDU, the VR Counselor must—

* Contact the VDU Diagnostician assigned to the VR Counselor’s region to discuss the customer's needs;
* Create a service record in RehabWorks (RHW);
* Delegate the RHW service record to the VDU diagnostician;
* Coordinate the scheduling with the VDU diagnostician; and
* Notify the customer of the assessment date, time, location, and any other pertinent details.

### Follow-up

After completing assessments, VDU Diagnosticians provide recommendations to the VR Counselor and customer, which are suggestions rather than requirements. The Diagnostician then summarizes the evaluation and recommendations in a case note in RHW and sends the report to the VR Counselor. The VR Counselor must promptly review the report with the customer, ensuring it does not delay services, and incorporates agreed-upon services into the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or IPE amendment. Additionally, consultation and report interpretation support are available upon request. The VR counselor can contact the VDU Diagnostician for guidance on next steps based on the assessment findings.

## APPROVALS & CONSULTATIONS

There are no approvals or consultations for this policy and these procedures.

**REVIEW**

The Policy Planning and Statewide Initiatives Team, or designee, is responsible for reviewing this policy and these procedures and will update the Document History log if necessary.

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| **Date** | **Type** | **Change Description** |
| 9/3/2024 | New | VRSM Policy and Procedure Rewrite |