

POLICIES FOR MAINTAINING SECURITY OF TEST MATERIALS

The Buros Center for Testing prioritizes the need to maintain the security of test materials and content. In keeping with this obligation, the Center has established policies and procedures to ensure the security of test materials received from test publishers, the following among them:

- a) The Reviewers Guide that is sent to invited reviewers as part of the written agreement between the Buros Center for Testing and each individual reviewer includes the following paragraph:

SECURITY OF TEST MATERIALS: Reviewers have the responsibility of storing all testing materials in a safe and secure location. Unless specifically requested for return by the Buros Institute, testing materials should be kept until test reviews have been published in the Mental Measurements Yearbook series in case questions arise about the specific language used in your evaluation. All test items and test protocols must be kept confidential. If testing materials are discarded, disposal must occur in a manner that will insure that no testing materials are compromised to third parties.

- b) Reviewers are doctoral level professionals from specialty areas in psychology and education primarily. These professionals are bound by their respective ethics codes, standards, principles, and codes of conduct promulgated by their professional associations. These entities address test security issues directly with statements such as, “Psychologists . . . maintain the integrity and security of test materials and other assessment techniques consistent with law and contractual obligations, and in a manner that permits adherence to this Ethics Code” (American Psychological Association, 2010, *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, Principle 9.11 Maintaining Test Security*).

Similarly, Standard II.5.1 of the *Principles for Professional Ethics* states that “School psychologists maintain test security, preventing the release of underlying principles and specific content that would undermine or invalidate the use of the instrument” (National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). Standard II.5.3 notes that school psychologists “respect the intellectual property rights and copyright interests of the producers of [test] materials, whether the materials are published in print or digital formats.”

In sections 3, 4, 7, and 8 of its *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*, the National Council on Measurement in Education specifies the responsibilities of individuals who select, administer, educate others, and conduct research related to assessment. The Code states that such individuals have professional responsibilities to “comply with all security precautions that may accompany assessment being reviewed,” “take appropriate security precautions before, during, and after the administration of the assessment,” “protect all secure assessments and

materials used in the instructional process,” and “preserve the security of all assessments throughout the research process as appropriate.”

- c) The editorial policies of the Buros Center for Testing call for the removal of actual test items if these have been incorporated in a submitted manuscript. All members of the editorial team (fact checkers, technical content editors, copyeditor, proofreader) seek to identify actual test items and take corrective action.

In order to reduce the likelihood of “sample items” being included in an initial draft of the review (and needing to be deleted during the editorial process), the following Q&A appears in our Reviewer FAQ (see <http://buros.org/reviewer-faq#faq09>):

Q: In order to better describe the test I am reviewing, I would like to include some sample items from the test in my test review. Is it OK to do so?

A: It is our policy to avoid disclosing actual test items in the test reviews published by the Buros Center. Doing so would jeopardize the security of the tests.

- d) On-site security of test materials for tests currently undergoing review is assured by holding all such materials in a locked interior storage room (i.e., without windows), access to which requires a key.
- e) On-site security of test materials from tests previously reviewed in the *Mental Measurements Yearbook* or indexed in *Tests in Print* is ensured by our library procedures, described and posted in our Library Use Policies document (available <http://buros.org/library/policy>). The document states,

In that tests developed for educational and psychological purposes are considered secure, all test materials are stored in locked, compressed storage units at the north end of the library.

It goes on to describe the limits on accessing test materials by noting,

Librarian assistance is needed to access all test materials. . . . To preserve test security, library patrons wishing to access test materials are required to show identification (e.g., NU ID or other photo identification) and to provide contact information. Access to test materials is restricted to individuals over the age of 19 years. Other restrictions may apply to individuals who are not enrolled in relevant courses (e.g., courses related to testing, assessment, or measurement; research courses).

The policy document also addresses copyright restrictions in stating,

No portion of any tests or other resources held by the library may be copied or duplicated in any way, including but not limited to the use of any electronic technology.

Test publishers are invited to contact us for further information or to request alternate or additional security measures for their tests. Our main office number is 402-472-6203.

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