

Chapter 1  
INITIAL EVALUATION OVERVIEW

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## Chapter 1 INITIAL EVALUATION AND ENTITLEMENT OVERVIEW

### 1.01 Introduction

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Division provides a comprehensive initial evaluation for any Veteran or Servicemember who applies for Chapter 31 benefits and meets the basic eligibility criteria. The evaluation is necessary to determine whether the Veteran or Servicemember is entitled to receive services under the Chapter 31 program. This chapter contains an overview of the initial evaluation and entitlement process, evaluation and planning determinations, information on the resources and tools used during the initial evaluation and entitlement process, vocational exploration and how to process the outcome of the evaluation.

### 1.02 General Information

The purpose of the initial evaluation is to develop information to make accurate entitlement decisions, assist the Veteran or Servicemember to understand his/her assets for vocational and career achievement or independent living needs and develop realistic and effective rehabilitation plans.

The comprehensive initial evaluation serves as the basis to determine entitlement, identify and clarify rehabilitation issues, develop solutions, develop employment or independent living options, establish a rehabilitation goal and intermediate goals and objectives for entitled Veterans or Servicemembers and identify and refer non-entitled Veterans or Servicemembers to other resources and programs for which they may qualify.

### 1.03 Evaluation and Planning Determinations

Before a Veteran or Servicemember can receive Chapter 31 services, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) makes a determination as to whether or not the Veteran or Servicemember is entitled to services based on a comprehensive initial evaluation. Once the VRC determines the Veteran or Servicemember is entitled to services, the VRC is required to determine whether or not it is currently feasible for the Veteran or Servicemember to obtain and maintain suitable employment. For more information on evaluation and planning determinations, see M28R.IV.B.2.

### 1.04 Resources and Tools for Initial Evaluation

The VRC uses a variety of resources and tools during the initial evaluation. The Resources and Tools for Initial Evaluation chapter covers the use of medical consultants, tests and measurements and the use of contractor services during

the initial evaluation. For more information on resources and tools for initial evaluation, see M28R.IV.B.3.

#### 1.05 Vocational Exploration

The goal of vocational exploration is for the Veteran or Servicemember and VRC to select a suitable vocational objective that is consistent with the Veteran's or Servicemember's abilities, aptitudes and interests, and that does not aggravate the Veteran's disability(ies). For more information on vocational exploration, see M28R.IV.B.4.

#### 1.06 Outcome of the Initial Evaluation

Every initial evaluation has an outcome. The Outcome of the Initial Evaluation chapter contains the statutory and regulatory provisions covering the steps to take based on whether or not the Veteran is found entitled to services, and how to close the Veteran's or Servicemember's case if the Veteran or Servicemember is found not entitled to Chapter 31 services. For more information on initial evaluation outcomes, see M28R.IV.B.5.