**Auburn University Syllabus**

1. Course Number: RSED 7310

Course Title: Proprietary Rehabilitation

Credit Hours: 3 Semester Hours

Prerequisites: Graduate Standing / Admission into Forensic Certification Program

Instructor of Record: Jill Meyer, PhD, LCPC, CRC

Professor & CED Director,

Auburn University

Expert Consultant: Michael McClanahan, PhD, ABVE

Live instruction 5:00-7:30 p.m., Wednesdays (ZOOM & Panopto)

2. Date Syllabus Prepared: August 2025

3. Text: Weed, Roger & Field, Timothy (2012). Rehabilitation Consultant’s Handbook. 4th Revised Edition. Elliott & Fitzpatrick, Inc., Athens, Ga.

4. Course Description:

This course is an overview of private sector vocational rehabilitation – with an emphasis on vocational evaluation. The student will be acquainted with the role and function of vocational evaluation, case management, and vocational expert work in workers’ compensation, personal injury, social security, and other litigated cases.

5. Course Objectives

The primary objective of this class is for students to develop an understanding of the professional and business practice of being a Vocational/Rehabilitation Expert, including:

* 1. To gain a working knowledge of theoretical and practical process models of private practice in settings involving litigation.
  2. To develop a working knowledge of the disability determination process in various sectors (i.e., worker compensation, personal injury, Social Security) often found in forensic rehabilitation service delivery systems.
  3. To develop the skill of critically analyzing professional efforts of professionals in fields other than Vocational Experts while not violating the “one profession shall not serve as a conduit to another profession” rule.
  4. To develop an understanding of the Vocational Expert’s role in Social Security Disability Hearings, Worker Compensation cases, and Personal Injury Cases.
  5. To understand the difference between hypothetical and fact-based questions.
  6. To develop a working knowledge of performing a transferability of skills analysis.
  7. To develop skill at performing a labor market access and wage loss analysis.
  8. To develop an appreciation and skill for conducting vocational interviews.
  9. To understand various techniques and strategies for presenting cases from the expert witness stand.

**Course Content and Tentative Course Schedule**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Topic / Exams | Reading / Assignments Due |
| 1  8/20/2025 | *What is a Forensic Practice in Rehabilitation?*  A Behind the Curtain Look at the Last two Weeks of Practice  “Clean Shirts” - Economics of Forensic Private Practice  SkillTRAN & Oasys  Class Orientation: Goals, Objectives, Tests, Assignments, Expectations | Assignment this week:  “What I Bring to the Vocational Expert Practice.” [5 points]. Read Chapter 11    Go to SkillTRAN website, review **Job Browser Pro Web:** Video   [Introduction](https://vimeo.com/549072965/34243ea8fd) (25 minutes) |
| 2  8/27/2025 | *AI in Proprietary Rehabilitation*  *Matthew McClanahan, Ph.D., CRC*  *&*  *Models for Forensic Vocational Evaluation*  Case Study  McClanahan’s Model | **“Assignment 1. What I Bring to the Vocational Expert Practice.” DUE**  **[5 points]**  Assignment:  Read Chapters 1 & 2  Appendix E  Appendix K: Interview Worksheet, Functional Considerations Checklist  Functional Capacity Checklist |
| 3  9/3/2025 | *Social Security: A Hypothetical Reality*  SkillTRAN & Oasys  File Review  Analyzing PRW  Transferability of Skills  Hypothetical Questions & Real Answers  Tricks of the Trade | Assignment:    Review VE HANDBOOK that is in Handouts File on Canvas  Appendix K: Transferability of Skills Worksheet |
| 4  9/10/2025 | *Social Security:* *A Hypothetical Reality* (continued)  Case Study  Demonstration | Assignment - 2. Vocational Expert Role in Worker Compensation Cases in my state [5 points]  Assignment:  Read Chapter 6    Log onto SkillTRAN; do searches |
| 5  9/17/2025 | *Workers Compensation: A Doctrine of Sameness*  Case Study  Alabama Model - Vocational Disability Ratings (VDR)  Rehabilitation Model  Other States | **Assignment - 2. Vocational Expert Role in Worker Compensation Cases in my state [5 points] DUE**  Assignment:  Read Chapter 3  SkillTRAN: **OASYS Web:** Video    [How to run a Transferable Skills Report](https://vimeo.com/547742939/0a69faaeb9) (18 minutes) |
| 6  9/24/2025 | *Workers Compensation: A Doctrine of Sameness* (continued) – Case Study  Physicians  Functional Capacity Evaluations | Assignment:  Read Chapters 4 & 5  **3. Job Browser & Oasys Social Security**  **Due [5 points]** |
| 7  10/1/2025 | *Staying in Your Lane When Venturing Out*  Guest:  Mr. Sam Ingram, Attorney at Law  ***What a Defense Lawyer Looks for in a Vocational Expert*** | **44. Job Browser & Oasys for Work Comp Due [ 5pts]**    Prep for Exam #1 |
| 8  10/8/2025 | **Quiz #1 [25 points]**  **\*Quizzes are online for all students\*** | Assignment:  Read Chapter 10  Appendix J |
| 9  10/15/2025 | *Personal Injury: Jury Deliberation*  A Life Care Planning  Guest -- TBA  ***Life Care Plans and Personal Injury*** | Assignment:  Read Chapter 7  Log onto Oasys program. Run searches |
| 10  10/22/2025 | *Personal Injury: Jury Deliberation*  Guest: Mr. Jeremy Knowles, Attorney at Law  ***Do’s & Don’ts of Vocational Experts*** | Assignment:  Read Chapter 8 |
| 11  10/29/2025 | *Personal Injury: Jury Deliberation*  Case Study  Worklife Expectancy  Wages  Benefits | Assignment:  Read Chapter 9 |
| 12  11/5/2025 | *Wrongful Death from the Insured’s POV*  Case Study  Rehabilitation Research  Hypothetical Approach | Assignment:  Appendix C, F  **55. Job Browser & Oasys for Personal Injury Assignment Due [5 pts]** |
| 13  11/12/2025 | *The Vocational Expert in the Courtroom*  Pre-trial preparation  Prepping the Lawyer - List of questions  Accommodation strategies | Assignment:  Read Chapter 12 |
| 14  11/19/2025 | *Hanging Up Your Shingle: Forensic Markets beyond “The Big Three”*  LTD  Divorce  Employment Law  VA  Corrections  Other | Assignment:  Enjoy Thanksgiving Holidays |
| 15  11/26/2026 | NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING WEEK | Prep for Exam #2  **6. Personal Injury Report & Rebuttal [25 pts] Assignment Due** |
| 16  12/3/2025 | **Quiz # 2 [25 points]**  **\*Quizzes are online for all students\*** |  |

**Course Requirements, Assignments, & Grading:**

Course assignments are due on the dates specified. When assignments are turned in late without an approved absence/excuse, scores for the assignments(s) will be reduced by two (2) points per day with no assignments accepted more than one week past the due date (refer to the Class Policy Statements in this syllabus for information about excused absences and make-up assignments). Students in this course are required to complete the specified course requirements.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignments / Quizzes:** | Points |
| 1. What I Bring to the Vocational Expert Practice | 5 |
| 2.Voc Expert Role in Work Comp Cases in my State | 5 |
| 3. Job Browser & Oasys for Social Security | 5 |
| 4. Job Browser & Oasys for Work Comp | 5 |
| Quiz #1 | 25 |
| 5. Job Browser & Oasys for Personal Injury | 5 |
| Quiz #2 | 25 |
| 6. Forensic VE Report & Rebuttal | 25 |
| **Total** | **100** |

**Grading Scale**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A 90-100% |  |
| B 80-89% |  |
| C 70-79% |  |
| D 60-69% |  |
| F Below 60% |  |

**Course Assignments, Requirements, & Evaluation:**

**[All of the assignments listed in this syllabus are subject to further development. What is included here is a synopsis]**

**1.**What I Bring to the Vocational Expert Practice [5 pts]

This is my opportunity to get a first impression of you. Please write a single-spaced, one-page paper (no more than one page, please) and respond to the following questions:

1. Please give a brief description of your education and work experience. Please do not attach a CV. I would like a thumbnail sketch in narrative form.

2. Why are you taking this course? What do you hope to get out of this course?

3. Have you worked as a Vocational Expert?

4. Are you familiar with transferability of skills? To what extent?

5. Have you used job search software?

6. Are you familiar with Department of Labor exertional categories, skill levels, and worker trait factors?

7. Where in the world of work do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?

8. Identify three things that you bring to the table that would help you as a forensic rehabilitation professional.

9. Make sure to include your name!

**2. Vocational Expert Role in Worker Compensation Cases in My State [5 pts]**

Your assignment is to provide a one-page description of the Vocational Expert’s role in worker compensation cases in your state of residence. This description should include a brief summary of the work comp laws in your state, and then describe the role of the Vocational Expert. You may join with others in the class and submit it as a group report, but you are welcome to go it alone as well. It is recommended that you gather information informally. In other words, if you know a person in your state who provides worker compensation assessments or case management, ask that person. If you do not know anyone, pick up the phone and call lawyers’ offices who advertise. Or ask around in any way you can to get the information. If your state has no use of a Voc Expert in work comp cases, say so. Your default will be Alabama’s worker compensation system that I will review in class. Please do not submit internet lifted information.

Please use 12-point font, Times New Roman. Single spaced. This is not a term paper. I do not care about margins, but I will count off if either page is more than one page. I recommend a series of bulleted statements that summarize your assessment. This is not APA style. The work on this assignment will be graded on content.

This is a 5-point assignment.

**3. Job Browser & Oasys for Social Security**

For this assignment, you are to prepare one case for VE testimony. To accomplish this, make a 6x8 (6 across, 8 down) table. Across the top of the table, left to right, the labels should be: Job Title, Dot number, Exertion, SVP, Skill, Claimant Exertion.

Now, insert the job titles from the attached SSA-3369-BK. In the last column, put the exertional level at which the claimant performed the job. This will be one of: S, L, M, H, V. The amount the claimant lifted on the job is described on each page describing the job. Notice that there is no description for one of the jobs. List it on the form anyway (this happens a lot).

Next, go to Skilltran.com. Your ID or Username is Auburn2, and PW is WarEagle1. When you need to do the transferability of skills, your user’s name is Auburn1. PW is same.

Locate each job using the search engine on the SkillTRAN website. Fill in the table with the information required. Assume that the last job listed was performed as described in the DOT. Also assume that the server is server, informal.

Respond, in writing to the following hypothetical questions:

H1 Assume a hypothetical individual who is 47 years old with a HS Diploma. This person can perform Medium work, unskilled. Can the person perform past relevant work. If so, which jobs? For the jobs eliminated, please explain why.

H2 Assume the same hypothetical individual who can perform Light work, unskilled. Can the person perform past relevant work. If so, which jobs? For the jobs eliminated, please explain why.

H3 Assume the same hypothetical individual who can perform Sedentary work, unskilled. Can the person perform past relevant work. If so, which jobs? For the jobs eliminated, please explain why.

H4 Assume the same hypothetical individual who can perform Light work, unskilled. In addition, this person can occasionally squat, stoop, kneel, crouch and crawl. In addition, this person cannot work in environments where there is more than Moderate background noise. Can the person perform past relevant work. If so, which jobs? For the jobs eliminated, please explain why.

H5 Assume the same hypothetical individual who can perform Medium work, unskilled. In addition, this person can occasionally squat, stoop, kneel, crouch and crawl. In addition, this person cannot work in environments where there is more than Moderate background noise. Can the person perform past relevant work. If so, which jobs? For the jobs eliminated, please explain why.

H6 Assume the same hypothetical individual and the assessment of the PRW you described. Are there transferrable skills that transfer to Light work? If so, identify 1 to 3 jobs that each of the jobs in this claimant’s PRW would transfer to. In your answer, make sure that the SVP of the jobs in the claimant’s PRW is at least a 4.

H7 Now reconsider H4. List three DOT job titles that are consistent with this hypothetical. Then give the incidences in the U.S. economy of each of the jobs. Make sure that the incidences reference full time employment only.

H8 In all of your answers above that you said the person could work, could that hypothetical individual work if she was absent 4 days per month?  
   
H9 In all of your answers above that you said the person could work, could that hypothetical individual work if she was off task 20% of the work day?

Please use 12-point font, single spaced. No more than 4 pages. I will count off if you go beyond the page limit. Grammar, syntax, etc. not an issue here.

[AU SSA-3369 Forensic Class Assignment.pdf](https://auburn.instructure.com/courses/1379952/files/183032071?wrap=1)[Download AU SSA-3369 Forensic Class Assignment.pdf](https://auburn.instructure.com/courses/1379952/files/183032071/download?download_frd=1)



**4. Job Browser & Oasys for Work Comp** [5 points]

This is a case of a 46-year-old female who was working as a Registered Nurse. She was working in an emergency shelter that was set up to accommodate Covid 19 patients when she slipped while assisting a patient onto a gurney and injured her back. She went through the usual course of conservative treatment (i.e., pain medications, physical therapy, graduated RTW schedule), and ultimately underwent a lumbar fusion. The procedure went well. She underwent a FCE that indicated she is capable of Light work with the ability to occasionally stoop, kneel, crouch, and crawl. She cannot climb or balance. She was earning $29.00 per hour, and working 55 hours per week.

1. Please identify the plaintiff’s PRW of RN as found on Job Browser Pro. You will find the best match is Nurse, General Duty. What is the DOT#, Exertional category, and Physical Demands?
2. Based on the FCE, can she RTW as an RN?
3. Conduct, via SkillTRAN, a search of the numbers of jobs in the DOT she could have performed before she was injured. Set the maximum physical abilities of the search as her PRW. In other words, if an RN in the DOT is a Medium job, set the search parameters at Medium. Do the same with the other physical demands. How many jobs are there?
4. Now run a second search based on the FCE results using the same methodology as #3 that is based on PRW. How many jobs in the DOT are there?
5. Based on those two LMA searches alone, what percentage of jobs can this plaintiff no longer perform that she could have performed had she not been injured?

To complete this assignment, you will need to go to Job Browser Pro. Locate the correct job in the plaintiff’s PRW and record the physical requirements. Then conduct a Worker Trait Factor (WTF) search of all the jobs that are in the DOT based on the plaintiff’s ability to work as an RN. Record that number. Then go back in and adjust the search parameters based on the FCE. Record that number.

This is a one-page assignment. Twelve-point font, single spaced. Simply answer the five questions above.

The answer to #1 is the Job Title, DOT#, Exertional Category, and Physical Demands

The answer to #2 is either “Yes” or “No.”

The answer to #3 is the number of DOT jobs she could perform preinjury based on her PRW

The answer to #4 is the number of DOT jobs she could perform postinjury based on the FCE

The answer to #5 is a number. It is the number of jobs she could perform based on the FCE (#4 above) divided by the number of DOT jobs she could perform preinjury based on her PRW. Subtract that number from 1 and then multiply it x100%.

Oasys: ID- Auburn1 PW- WarEagle1

Job Browser Pro: Auburn2 PW- WarEagle1

**Quiz #1 & Quiz #2 (25 points & 25 points)**

There will be two quizzes this semester. The second quiz will be comprehensive, with approximately 25% coming from information covered prior to Quiz #1. The quizzes will cover instructor presented material, reading assignments from the text, guest lectures, and assignments. Quizzes will be multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and matching. Quizzes are online through Canvas.

**5. Job Browser & Oasys for Personal Injury** 5 pts

Oasys: ID- Auburn1 PW- WarEagle1

Job Browser Pro: Auburn2 PW- WarEagle1

You have been retained by counsel to examine, explain, and make recommendations of a Vocational Evaluator on the other side of a case who obtained the following scores on testing (assume testing is valid):

Wais IV IQ – 99 (Verbal = 112; Performance 88)

Achievement

Reading Comprehension & Word Recognition – 10th grade

Math – 7th grade (SS=84)

The aptitudes obtained are described in U.S. DoL classifications:

G 3

V 2

N 4

S 4

P 4

Q 3

K 5

F 4

M 3

You also have available ASVAB scores that were obtained 12 years ago. These scores are described in percentiles (compared to the general working population).

G – 97.5

V – 95

N -- 93

S -- 50

P --70

Q -- 55

K -- 88

F -- 91

M -- 95

Further assume that the individual was an Electrical Engineer (DOT # 003.061-010) for six years prior to the injury in which she fell 22 feet from the cat walk of a power plant. She suffered an LOC; the time she was out estimated at eight to 10 minutes.

1. Convert the ASVAB scores to the 1-5 scores used by the US DoL
2. List the converted aptitude scores in the provided table.
3. List the academic scores by GED (Reasoning, Math, Language) level
4. List the aptitudes from your analysis of PRW
5. Comments are brief, table form. Compare each of the aptitudes by source (i.e., ASVAB, PRW, VE). No need to recommend neuropsychological.
6. Are there jobs available based on the VE’s scores? If so, list five of them by title and DOT number.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ASVAB %ILE Converted | PRW | VE’s Scores | Differences, comments |
| G |  |  |  |  |
| V |  |  |  |  |
| N |  |  |  |  |
| S |  |  |  |  |
| P |  |  |  |  |
| Q |  |  |  |  |
| K |  |  |  |  |
| F |  |  |  |  |
| M |  |  |  |  |

1. **Forensic Vocational Evaluation Report & Rebuttal [25 points]**

You are to write a Report as if it is destined for trial. You will be given the body of the Report and you will, based on the data contained in the body, write the Vocational Appraisal section. Upon completing the report, you are to write a rebuttal to it. The full report is not to exceed 5 pages, and the rebuttal should be no more than 2 pages. Eleven-point Times New Roman font (or similar).

Two documents follow that you are to use for this assignment. The first is the body of the Vocational Evaluation Report for “Mr. Client” sans Vocational Appraisal. You will write the Vocational Appraisal section.

There are only two things you need to do to the body of the Report. The first is that you need to create your own letterhead and insert the letterhead at the beginning of the report. Feel free to be creative. Make sure that the letterhead does not repeat after the first page. The other thing is that you are to date the Report the date you submit it to me.

Keep in mind that you are writing this Report as an expert that has been hired by plaintiff counsel. This is your report that you wrote and you want to defend it and your opinions.

Please take a look at the Vocational Appraisal section of the Report that follows. This is where you do your work. Nothing that is in the [] s is to be repeated. The bracketed information is my instruction to you. The only exception is the medical records review.

After you have completed the Vocational Appraisal section, I recommend that you set it aside for a day. Then go back over it and make final edits.

After you make final edits, then work on the rebuttal. For the rebuttal, you are to assume the role of the defense expert who has been hired to look over the vocational evaluation report and critique it with opinions convenient to the defense side of the case.

TIPS:

This case should be familiar to you: it is the one we went over with Jeremy Knowles on October 23, 2024. You might be helped by going over that discussion on Panopto.

Parameters: Please use Times New Roman font 11. Do not go over two pages on the Vocational Appraisal section and do not exceed two pages on the rebuttal. Pay attention to page breaks on the report, avoiding widows and orphans.

I recommend that you look at the sample reports in Files for the style of language that I use and am recommending for this assignment. This is not a creative writing activity. I am coaching you to a specific style and technique. Feel free to copy that style.

Insert your letterhead here]

**Vocational Evaluation Report**

**I. Background Information** Date

Regarding: Mr. Client

Address: 7310 Haley Center Road

Auburn, Alabama 36849

Phone: 334. 765-4321

Date of Birth: 11/16/1974 (Age = 50)

Date of Onset: 08/29/2023

Employer at Onset: Mining Company

Referral Source: Mr. I. M. Barrister, Attorney at Law

Date of Testing: 10/23/2024

This is an attorney referral for an assessment of vocational prognosis and disability rating in relation to a motor vehicle collision. Testing, conducted on October 23, 2024, included:

Vocational Interview

Visual Analog Pain Rating Scale Technique

Wide Range Achievement Test – Revision 5 (*WRAT-5)*

Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence - Second Edition (*WASI-II*)

Sage Manual Dexterity Test

Purdue Pegboard

SkillTRAN – Job Browser Pro

Review of referral information

**Referral information**. Pain Clinic; Neurology Center; Family Practice; UAB; DCH Regional Medical Center; Tuscaloosa Medical Center; Mr. Client’s W2s; miscellaneous.

**II. Vocational Interview**

*The information contained within this section was obtained directly from the claimant and may / may not be corroborated by other sources (e.g., medical, educational records, etc.).*

**History of Onset/Background Information.** Mr. Client is a 50-year-old male who related history of a motor vehicle collision (MVC) on August 29, 2023. He was in an “automobile accident involving heavy equipment entrapment for 4+ hours.” He sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI) as well as several musculoskeletal injuries to include a fractured left hip and femur, dislocated acetabulum, torn ligaments in the right knee, lumbar disc herniation with radiculopathy (L3/L4), and a damaged peroneal nerve that causes right foot drop. He underwent surgeries to the left lower extremity with hardware (i.e., plate, screws) in the left hip. He was hospitalized for approximately two months for inpatient care and rehabilitation immediately following the MVC, but he is unable to recall the first couple weeks of treatment as a result of TBI related amnesia. He participates in physical therapy three times per week. In the “past month or two” he transitioned from using a walker to a quad cane for ambulation. Mr. Client, who was observed to be using the quad cane during our appointment, reported that the use of the walker exacerbated pre-existing problems of pain and range of motion in the left (nondominant) shoulder for which he has been recommended partial reconstruction surgery. In addition to the TBI and musculoskeletal injuries, he suffers with anxiety, depression, and sleep problems.

At time of injury, Mr. Client was employed as a Mechanic for Mining Company – his employer since 2004. He has not worked since the MVC. In order to return to his position at time of injury, he must pass a physical test in August 2024 that requires ambulating on a treadmill for three miles while wearing a 50-pound backpack in under 60 minutes. He presented to testing with pain and/or dysfunction to the left hip, left leg, right leg/foot, left shoulder, and lower back.

Mr. Client’s medical history, other than the above, includes hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, osteoarthritis, gout, and obesity. He had bilateral carpal tunnel surgery 2012 with residual reduced hand strength. Medications include Olmesartan, Rosuvastatin, Colchicine, Pregabalin, Buprenorphine Patch, and Oxycodone/Acetaminophen.

Mr. Client gave his height at 5’6” and weight at 259 pounds. He reportedly lost 30 pounds while in the hospital and inpatient rehabilitation, but he gained 29 pounds back since returning home as a result of “medication and limited activity due to pain.” He uses a quad cane, knee brace, LFO right foot brace, a TENS/EMS unit, and a shower bench. He continues to require assistance from his wife with activities of daily living.

**Claimant’s Perception of Functional Abilities.** Mr. Client can sit for 15 – 20 minutes before shifting. He is able to stand 3 – 4 minutes and walk 50 yards, both with the use of a cane. He can drive for 15- to 20-minute intervals. He is able to lift “no more than 10 pounds.” He can reasonably climb 3 stairs, but never climb ladders, ropes, or scaffolds. His balance is limited secondary to right foot drop. He avoids stooping, kneeling, crouching, and crawling as these activities are painful. Reaching and handling are limited in the left upper extremity due to pain and dysfunction that include a limited range of motion (he can raise his left arm only to his chest) and episodic numbness in the left hand; the right upper extremity is unaffected. He is able to finger and feel. His speech, hearing, taste/smell, and visual acuity remain intact. He is right-handed.

**Pain Assessment.** Mr. Client described pain in several areas of the body, including the left hip, right leg/foot, left shoulder, lower back, and left leg. He rated the intensity of the pain using *the Visual Analog Scale Technique* (zero is no pain and 10 requires an immediate trip to the emergency room) for the 30 days prior to the evaluation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **At Beginning of Testing / After Testing** | **Typical**  **(past** **30 days)** | **Worst**  **(past 30** **days**) | **Least**  **(past 30 days)** | **≥ 7**  **(past 30 days)** |
| Left Hip | 5 / 6 – 7\* | 6 | 9 | 5 | 30 |
| Right Leg/Foot | 6 / 3\* | 7 | 9 | 3 | 30 |
| Left Shoulder | 3 / 3\* | 5 | 8 | 3 | 10 – 15 |
| Lower Back | 3 / 4 – 5\* | 5 | 8 | 3 | 15 |
| Left Leg | 5 / 5 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 16+ |

\*Mr. Client took pain medication after the first pain rating was recorded and before the second pain rating was recorded.

**Emotional Adjustment.** Mr. Client admitted to a personality change, or a significant psychological response to the injury. He described himself as depressed and as having “a lot of anxiety.” While he was in inpatient rehabilitation, a psychiatrist prescribed a medication for anxiety that he no longer takes because of side effects (i.e., dizziness). He is not currently under the care of a mental health professional. He denied severe symptoms (e.g., psychosis, suicidal ideation).

**Education / Training**. Mr. Client completed the 11th grade before dropping out of high school in 1993 to focus on being a father and to work fulltime. He repeated the 6th grade and was not in special education classes. He described himself as a ‘C’ student. He earned a GED in 1996 or 1997. He had some vocational training in high school wherein he earned a certificate for welding from TAVS in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He has no other formal or vocational training. He has never served in the military.

**Employment History.** Mr. Client has been employed with Mining Company since May 2004. At time of injury, he was a Mechanic working an average of 50 hours per week at a wage rate of $28/hr. (with overtime pay). His description of this job is consistent with the Medium/Heavy exertion range and Semi to Skilled. In order to return to this job, he must pass a physical test in August 2024 that requires ambulating on a treadmill for three miles while wearing a 50-pound backpack in under 60 minutes

Additional work history includes employment with VXY Materials at two separate times: (1) during a 5-month strike at Mining Company in 2022/2023; and (2) from 2001 to 2004. He worked as a Loader Operator and Mechanic in both stints with VXY Materials. Prior to these jobs, Mr. Client worked as a Loader Operator and Mechanic for Steel Company (1999 – 2001) and as a Sawyer and Mechanic for Spencer Lumber Company (1993 – 1999). Each of these jobs were performed at the Heavy to Very Heavy exertion level and Semiskilled to Skilled.

**III. Test Results**

**Academic**. Mr. Client was administered the *Wide Range Achievement Test-Revision 5* (WRAT-5), which assesses fund of knowledge or academic achievement with respect to what is generally taught from elementary school through secondary education.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Raw score** | **Standard score** | **%ile rank** | **Grade score** |
| **Word Reading** | 57 | 96 | 39th | >12.9 |
| **Sentence Comprehension** | 40 | 93 | 32nd | 10.9 |
| **Spelling** | 40 | 93 | 32nd | 9.4 |
| **Math Computation** | 37 | 93 | 32nd | 7.2 |
| **Reading Composite\*1** | 184 | 91 | 27th | 12.0 |

\*1 Reading Composite is a derived score of Word Reading and Sentence Comprehension, combined. Grade score estimated

**Intelligence**. The Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence - Second Edition (WASI-II) is an IQ test designed to assess specific and overall cognitive capabilities. It is a battery of four subtests: Vocabulary, Block Design, Similarities, and Matrix Reasoning. In addition to assessing general or Full-Scale intelligence, the WASI-II is designed to provide estimates of Verbal and Performance abilities consistent with other Wechsler tests. Specifically, the four subtests comprise the Full-Scale IQ (FSIQ-4). The Vocabulary and Similarities subtests are combined to form the Verbal composite score, and the Block Design and Matrix Reasoning subtests are combined to form the Perceptual Reasoning composite score. Mr. Client demonstrated a Verbal composite score of 81 (Low Average; 10th percentile), a Perceptual Reasoning score of 88 (Low Average; 21st percentile), and a Full-Scale score of 83 (Low Average; 13th percentile).

**Vocational Aptitudes**. Aptitudes are the capacities or specific abilities that an individual must have in order to learn to perform a given work activity. For this analysis, Mr. Client’s previously referenced WRAT-5 scores, WASI-II scores, Purdue Pegboard results, and the Sage Manual Dexterity test results were considered. His scores are compared to competitively employed workers and presented in DoL's classification system.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aptitude** | **Percentile Ranking** | **Normative Comparison** |
| General Learning | 11-33% | Below Average |
| Verbal | 11-33% | Below Average |
| Numerical | 11-33% | Below Average |
| Spatial | 11-33% | Below Average |
| Form Perception | 11-33% | Below Average |
| Clerical Perception | 11-33% | Below Average |
| Motor Coordination | 0-10% | Significantly Below Average |
| Finger Dexterity | 0-10% | Significantly Below Average |
| Manual Dexterity | 34-66% | Average |

**Worker Trait Factor Search.** A Worker Trait Factor (WTF) Search of all of the jobs in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) database was performed using the SkillTRAN program. Mr. Client’s academic and aptitudes as demonstrated in the present evaluation were used as the search criteria. In addition, the search was limited to the Sedentary and Light exertional categories with some postural and upper extremity limitations. The searched jobs included all the WTFs that comprise 12,761 job titles. This process yielded no jobs that exist in significant numbers in our national economy performable by someone with Mr. Client’s demonstrated academic abilities and aptitudes.

**Vocational Appraisal**

[The Vocational Appraisal section is intended to have the capacity as a standalone document. In other words, a person should be able to simply read the Appraisal section and have a good understanding of what is in the body of the Report. This section is the only section in which opinions are given.

There are 5 paragraphs to write. Following are details of what I am looking for in each paragraph.

[Paragraph 1 – is a restatement of the case: Who the person is, what happened, and why they were referred for the evaluation. Hint: I usually will copy “History of onset/ background information” from page one, rewrite using different language, add a couple of things and paragraph 1 is complete]

[Paragraph 2. This is a narrative description of the functional capacities as described by the client followed by a narrative of the pain ratings and the consequence of pain. Hint: I usually copy “Claimant’s perception of functional abilities here, do a re-write similar to paragraph 1. Conclude this paragraph with a discussion of the pain ratings and their impact on work]

[Paragraph 3. Discuss the issues of the potential sequelae of TBI. Make sure to recommend a neuropsychological (or similar diagnostic process) to document the TBI and treatment recommendations.]

[Paragraph 4. Discuss the test results. Are they internally and externally consistent? Do the standard scores from achievement testing approximate the IQ score? If they differ, what is a reasonable reason? The TBI? Make sure to include the upper extremity tests – Motor Coordination, Finger Dexterity, Manual Dexterity and what they mean.]

[Paragraph 5. This is the medical records review. Feel free to insert the following paragraph verbatim:

The medical records corroborate the history given by Mr. Client and include diagnoses and treatment consistent with his presenting complaints. There is nothing in the record that indicates that he has reached Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI), and there is no discussion of *permanent* functional limitations. Accordingly, the following discussion of vocational prognosis might be considered preliminary until such time he has reached MMI. Given than he is approaching the eight-month mark since the injury and the nature of his ongoing issues and pain, it is reasonable to consider that this gentleman is facing significant functional consequences of a permanent nature.]

[Paragraph 6. This is the paragraph that most people go to first. It is the “IT” paragraph. Tell the reader what your ultimate opinion is here. Can they work? If not, why not? Emphasize functional limitations, pain ratings, results of testing, the WTF search, and anything else to support your opinion.]

[Paragraph 7. Sign off paragraph followed by signature]

[Insert your letterhead here]

Date

Ms. Counselor, Attorney at Law

ForTheFirm Law Firm

Peachtree Street

Atlanta, Georgia

Re: Mr. Client

Date of Birth: 11/16/1974 (Age = 50)

Date of Alleged Onset: 08/29/2023

Dear Ms. Counselor:

This is in response to your request that I consider the [date] Vocational Evaluation Report submitted by [insert your name here] regarding the above captioned individual, Mr. Client.

[Briefly summarize the Report]

[Identify the flaws in the Report, and the process. Make sure to mention that the report was performed before the client reached MMI. This section can be multiple paragraphs. Some ideas: pain ratings are subjective, the WTF search is based on the DOT and it is dated and flawed, no physician has assigned functional limitations]

[After the critique of the report, give your ideas as to why Mr. Client does not need to be permanently disabled. Would rehab help him? School? Self-employment? Your job here is to mitigate the report submitted by the plaintiff expert]

[Professional sign off is the concluding paragraph

**Class Policy Statements:**

**Participation**: Students are expected to participate in all classes and participate in all exercises. ***It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor if assignment deadlines are not met***. Students are responsible for initiating arrangements for missed work in advance of the due date. This syllabus is considered a contract between the instructor and student.

**Attendance/Absences**: Attendance is expected at each class meeting. If an exam is missed, a make-up exam (it may be in another format) will be given only for university-approved excuses. Arrangement to take the make-up exam must be made in advance. Students who miss an exam because of illness need a doctor’s statement for verification of sickness. Other unavoidable absences from class must be documented and cleared with the instructor in advance. See the General Counsel Policies at <https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/default.aspx>.

**Accommodations**: "Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately.” To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail (mcm0009@auburn.edu) If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with The Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 334-844-2096 (V/TT)."

**Professionalism**: As faculty, staff, and students interact in professional settings, they are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College’s conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are listed below:

* + 1. Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices
    2. Contribute to collaborative learning communities
    3. Demonstrate a commitment to diversity
    4. Model and nurture intellectual vitality

**Assignments**: This class adheres to the current style manual of the American Psychological Association, unless otherwise specified. This is particularly true for the final Vocational Evaluation Report (assignment #7). Other assignments will be graded more on content than on style. This is divergent from other classes you might have in this program. The reason for this disparity is to encourage students to function as forensic specialist do. That is, with one eye on content, the other on time.

**Academic Integrity:**

As a graduate student in the Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling department, you will be held to the highest standards of academic conduct. Academic misconduct will be dealt with according to General Counsel Policy.

(see <https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/default.aspx>)

All your work in this class should be original to you and to this class. Of course you are expected to explore, analyze, and discuss the ideas of others, but you must give them proper credit through citations and references. Also recycling papers from other classes is not acceptable. You can certainly continue to explore an area of interest, but you must do new or additional research and writing. The bottom line is ALWAYS (on exams, on papers, on projects, on presentations) do your own, original work, give credit to others for their ideas, and, if in doubt, ask.

According to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010), plagiarism (p. 15) involves presenting the work of another as if it were your own work. Work can refer to the written words of another, or their ideas. It is very important that you give appropriate credit to others when you use their work. If you use the exact words of an author in constructing a sentence or paragraph, you must use quotation marks around those words and give the page number in the citation. If you paraphrase someone else’s work, you must also give them credit with a citation. Paraphrasing involves rewriting someone else’s words to say what they said. It is best to use your own words when paraphrasing, but you can rearrange the order of words in an author’s sentence AND change some of the words and this would be considered paraphrasing. A good rule to follow is that any time you use more than three words in a row from an author, put those words in quotes.

**All students are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid committing plagiarism in their written work. If plagiarism exists, it is a violation of the APA Ethical Standards, regardless of intention.**

**AI Policy: Permitted when Assigned in this Course with Attribution**

In this course, students are permitted to use Generative AI Tools such as Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini for specific assignments, as designated by the instructor. To maintain academic integrity, students must disclose any use of AI-generated material. As always, students must properly use attributions, including in-text citations, quotations, and references. Students should exercise caution and avoid sharing any sensitive or private information when using these tools. Examples of such information include personally identifiable information (PII), protected health information (PHI), financial data, intellectual property (IP), and any other data that might be legally protected.

A student should include the following statement in assignments to indicate use of a Generative AI Tool: “The author(s) would like to acknowledge the use of [Generative AI Tool Name], a language model developed by [Generative AI Tool Provider], in the preparation of this assignment. The [Generative AI Tool Name] was used in the following way(s) in this assignment [e.g., brainstorming, grammatical correction, citation, which portion of the assignment].”

**General Counsel Policies**

General Counsel now maintains a single website that serves as the collection of all University Policies: <https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/default.aspx>. This replaces the Tiger Cub policies.

**SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER:**

***The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed due to the developmental needs of the students. In the event that changes are deemed necessary, the instructor will inform students the at the earliest date possible in class, email, or Canvas.***