

Training Program Proposal

The American Board of Vocational Experts is now 40 years old. In 1979 it was formed by Ken Anchor and Claude Peacock, with the first conference being held in March 1985 in St. Thomas. In the early stages, it was a for-profit entity with one of the goals being to develop a relationship with a university and provide a Ph.D. program in forensic vocational expert testimony. Around 1986, Mr. Anchor and Mr. Peacock started planning an education and training program specifically designed for vocational experts and in early 1987 the American College of Vocational Experts (ACVE) was formed for the purpose of providing specialized training which would result in a Doctor of Vocational Studies (DVS). My recollection is that there were regular arguments between members of ABVE regarding the focus of the organization with some feeling that it should be focused on education and others feeling that it should be focused on being a certification organization.

The DVS program consisted of 15 weekends over the Summer and Fall of 1987 with the sessions being held at various locations in Alabama. The tuition for the one year program was \$6,500. The first class consisted of 13 students, but the state of Alabama Commission on Higher Education informed Mr. Anchor and Mr. Peacock that they “must get their program licensed and approved by the state or shut it down.” Two other institutions were approached about adopting this educational program, but neither did. In April 1988, Ken Anchor submitted his resignation effective May of 1989 and ACVE ceased to exist.

ABVE re-organized in 1988 to become a non-profit organization, with neither of the founders taking leadership positions in the new organization.

I wanted to give this background information regarding ABVE as I feel that we have come full circle on the topic of education. ABVE has an Associate Membership, but an applicant must have at least three years of forensic experience in order to be eligible to sit for our certification examination. The problem as I see it, is how we assist the Associates in developing the foundation to be vocational experts and ultimately have the qualifications for our certification examination. New standards are to be introduced by CACREP in 2024 regarding the accreditation of rehabilitation counseling programs, with most of the instructors I have spoken with anticipating that the focus will become towards traditional counseling instead of rehabilitation counseling.

I have been in contact with professionals throughout the country including past presidents of ABVE regarding the status of training programs focused on forensic vocational rehabilitation and have not found any that I feel are worth a student’s time and money. Within the past 10 years there have been three programs with these being at Minnesota State University, the University of Florida and George Washington University. According to Scott Beveridge the program at George Washington University was shuttered a few years ago. Dan Wolstein indicates that the University of Florida program continues, but is not as comprehensive as it should be and I don’t believe that Minnesota State University is maintaining a program any longer.

The University of Auburn is promoting their program with appears to be existing graduate level courses combined into a forensic program. The following is information that the various universities have posted to market their programs.

Graduate Certificate Program in Forensic Vocational Rehabilitation-Minnesota State University

The Graduate Certificate in Forensic Vocational Rehabilitation prepares qualified rehabilitation professionals for providing expert witness and consultant services to the courts in a variety of civil ("tort") litigation venues, including: personal injury; product liability; Worker's Compensation; Social Security disability; employment law; discrimination; catastrophic injury with a Life Care Plan; professional malpractice; divorce; wrongful death of an adult or child; and other related areas. Primarily, the Forensic Vocational Rehabilitation Expert/Consultant will address issues surrounding the impact of physical, mental, and/or emotional injury on the plaintiff and family members, in relation to loss of earnings/wages, loss of functional capacities, ongoing medical and psychological needs, loss of capacity to perform household duties, and other aspects of losses incurred, depending upon laws governing a particular case and what damages can be sought.

Rehabilitation Counselor's, Vocational Evaluators, and professionals in related disciplines have been serving as Vocational Experts for the Social Security Administration, as part of the disability determination process for award of SSI and SSDI benefits since the mid-1960's. Over the course of the last 40 years, the use of vocational rehabilitation experts and consultants by the courts has expanded greatly. This foundation and the growing number of Senior citizens should result in continued growth in demand for forensic experts.

The Graduate Certificate in Forensic Vocational Rehabilitation requires satisfactory completion of the following 5 courses (15 credits), which are offered online only:

REHB 670 Foundations of Forensic Vocational Rehabilitation Consultation (3)

REHB 672 Law and the Forensic Rehabilitation Consultant (3)

REHB 674 Socioeconomic Costs of Acquired Disability (3)

REHB 676 Case Analysis and Opinion Development (3)

REHB 678 Presenting Rehabilitation Opinion: Case Simulation (3)

Forensic Vocational Rehabilitation University of Florida

Designed for working professionals that currently have a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or working professionals that are already certified rehabilitation counselors. This program is offered online, so students will not have to sacrifice their work and family life in order to further their education and enrich their careers.

The University of Florida

Jobs for rehabilitation counselors are expected to grow by 19%, which is faster than the average for all occupations. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people who will need rehabilitation counseling will increase as the size of the elderly population, whose members

become injured or disabled at a higher rate than other age groups, increases and as treatment for mental health related disabilities increases.

Forensic CRCs Have High Salaries: According to a survey of 1,220 Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) conducted by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CORE), CRCs working within a forensic/expert witness job function have the highest annual salary (\$93,000) of all job functions analyzed. Furthermore, when average salaries were analyzed by primary work setting, CRCs working within business or industry have the highest annual salary (\$78,000) of all settings listed, which is \$30,000 more than CRCs working in state/federal rehabilitation agencies. High annual salaries in the forensic area may be a key attraction for CRCs seeking to transition from the public sector.

Rehabilitation professions who complete the program will be prepared to improve the health and well-being of individuals by evaluating the vocational, medical and rehabilitation needs of individuals in legal settings, including include social security, worker's compensation and personal injury.

Faculty have a strong research focus on the vocational and rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within forensic settings and are currently involved in funded forensic rehabilitation research from the Veterans' Health Administration and the Foundation for Life Care Planning Research.

This is a non-credit professional certificate. Registration is open year-round and students may complete the self-paced program at any time. The program is comprised of 3 required courses.

Course Outline

Course 1: Forensic Rehabilitation Consultation 1

Areas of practice opportunity :

- Social Security
- Marital Dissolution
- Personal Injury
- Worker's Compensation

Introduction to forensic report development

Course 2: Forensic Rehabilitation Consultation 2

- Practice methodology
- Client forensic interview
- Utilization of vocational testing
- Impact of disability in legal cases
- Application of medical and psychosocial case information
- Long-term care and rehabilitation considerations
- Vocational capacity analysis
- Vocational skills analysis
- Earnings Capacity

- Wage-loss analysis
- Job placement

Course 3: Forensic Rehabilitation Consultation 3

- Ethical considerations for the forensic expert
- Marketing
- Development of forensic vocational reports
- Formulating opinions for testimony
- Expert witness testimony Depositions: Trials, Defense cases, Plaintiff cases
- Case research and cost recommendations
- Case documentation

Program Format:

This program consists of 3 self-paced courses. This is an entirely online program. The online material consists of pre-recorded lectures, assigned reading, class assignments and projects, discussion posts, and quizzes.

Upon registration for the program, you will be enrolled in the first course. Upon completion of course materials, you will be directed to register for the second course. This will continue until you complete the third course.

Upon successful completion of the third course, you will be awarded a certificate of completion by the University of Florida.

There is an instructor of record who will respond to participant inquiries about any of the instructional content.

Tuition

The program cost is \$1,000 per course. The program consists of 3 total courses.

Auburn University

Semester	Course Information
Fall	<p>COUN 7520 – Introduction to Rehabilitation and Case Management This course focuses on the history and development of the rehabilitation movement inclusive of its legal base, philosophies, concepts, and current trends. The rehabilitation process and its application are examined from the perspective of the person with a disability and the rehabilitation professional.</p> <p>RSED 7310 – Proprietary Rehabilitation This course is an overview of vocational rehabilitation in private sector rehabilitation. The student will be acquainted with case management and vocational expert witness work in settings which draw from workers compensation, personal injury litigation, social security, and other third-party funding sources.</p>
Spring	<p>COUN 7130 – Vocational Evaluation This course provides knowledge regarding the intent and use of assessment in the field of vocational rehabilitation counseling and evaluation, including selection, administration, scoring, and interpretation/recommendations of assessment methods and tools (e.g., standardized instruments in the areas of intelligence, aptitude, achievement, interests, and personality).</p> <p>COUN 7950 – Emerging Adulthood & Transition in Rehabilitation This course introduces the transition process of youth with disabilities from school to adulthood and employment with emphasis on the developmental stage emerging adulthood.</p>
Summer	<p>COUN 7930 – Advanced Theories This course includes intensive study of advanced theories within rehabilitation counseling, as well as an examination of outcome research relating to the use and application of these theories and techniques.</p> <p>COUN 7110 – Occupational, Career, & Placement Services This course is designed to familiarize students with career theory and methods used by rehabilitation practitioners to analyze and apply vocational techniques to place individuals with disabilities.</p>

The cost for this program is over \$11,000.

Having met with the Executive Committee of ABVE and having their support, I am making the following motion(s):

1. That ABVE create a Membership Committee and add the chairperson of that committee onto our Board of Directors.
2. That ABVE charge that committee with developing a training program which would give entry level practitioners the skills necessary to become forensic vocational experts.
3. That the training program and participation in the training program will not alter the requirements for our certification exams.
4. The completion of the training program would provide a certificate from ABVE but would not be considered a certification.