

Physicians Values In Practice Scale (PVIPS) FAQs

Q. What are values?

Values are the principles or beliefs that influence your decisions. The outcomes of these choices impact all aspects of your life, including your career and the satisfaction you feel working in your job.

Q. Why should I assess my values?

A thorough understanding of your values helps you make decisions that incorporate desired elements into—or exclude undesirable ones from—your personal and work lives. If you understand how you feel about various values, you can seek work settings and tasks where the values most important to you—your core values—are present. In doing so, you’re more likely to be happy and satisfied in your work as a physician.

Q. What is the PVIPS?

The Physician Values in Practice Scale (PVIPS) is an assessment instrument that provides a quick, reliable measure of your values as they relate to the practice of medicine. The PVIPS helps you identify what is important to you as a physician and how you want to practice medicine. This tool identifies your priorities regarding six values (Autonomy, Management, Prestige, Service, Lifestyle, and Scholarly Pursuits) and provides results that you can compare to various environments and activities in medical practice.

Q. What is the process for completing the PVIPS?

The assessment features 60 statements that correspond with six values (Autonomy, Management, Prestige, Service, Lifestyle, and Scholarly Pursuits). Each statement begins with the phrase, “In my medical practice, it will be important that I ...” and ends with a phrase that describes a specific aspect of work as a physician such as “... assume a management role” or “work as a physician scientist.” You’ll read and respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree. After you choose your response, the next statement will appear. You must answer all 60 items for the results to be computed.

Note: Be sure your responses reflect how you actually feel, rather than how you think you should feel. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions.

Q. How long does it take to complete the PVIPS?

It should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete the PVIPS. And you must respond to all 60 statements for the results to be computed.

Q. When should I take the PVIPS?

Most medical students should complete the PVIPS during their first or second year of medical school. Because your values may change as you experience new situations and events, review your values periodically and consider taking the PVIPS multiple times throughout medical school. Each time you take the assessment, your results are stored in your Personal Profile for comparison over time.

Q. How are my scores calculated?

Each item/statement is associated with one of the six value scales. Numerical ratings have been assigned to each of the item responses as follows:

- Strongly Agree = 5
- Agree = 4
- Neutral = 3
- Disagree = 2
- Strongly Disagree = 1

These numerical ratings are then used to calculate your mean scores for the PVIPS scales and subscales. The higher the scale or subscale score, the more important that value is to you.

High scores = 3.5–5

Moderate scores = 2.5–3.49

Low scores = 1–2.49

Q. What are the PVIPS scales and subscales?

Scale/Subscale name	Scale/Subscale description
Autonomy	Freedom, independence, and control over clinical decision making; opportunities to work creatively
Management	Supervision, leadership, and administrative responsibility

Prestige	Recognition, social status, and financial compensation
Service	Caring for and contributing to the welfare of others; working with community services
Lifestyle	Hours worked, call schedules, work demands, and time for leisure, family, and friends
Schedule	Work demands, regular work hours and call schedule
Work/Life Balance	Time for personal, leisure, and social activities
Scholarly Pursuits	Research, teaching, and scholarship
Research	Conducting research; writing or editing for scholarly journals
Teaching	Teaching and working in a medical school as faculty or staff

Q. I've taken the PVIPS, now how do I interpret my scores?

First, review your profile overall. Consider the overall shape in terms of high, medium, and low points. Your highest scores indicate core values related to your career in medicine. Lower scores indicate what is less important and provide useful information for self-reflection about what you may not value or find meaningful in your career.

Second, if you scored Lifestyle and Scholarly Pursuits high, review the subscales to determine which contributed the highest score and which activities may be more important to you.

Third, review the content of the statements and how you rated each one. Compare them to the overall score for the related value.

Q. Why are subscales missing from my results?

Subscales were added to the PVIPS assessment in May 2010. To see subscales in your results, you must retake the PVIPS.

Q. Can I use the PVIPS in choosing a specialty?

We recommend you don't because our PVIPS research found small differences between specialties and specialty groups:

- In general, medical students who completed the PVIPS and have since entered residency in primary care specialties, such as family medicine or pediatrics, scored Service high and Prestige and Scholarly Pursuits low.
- Students who entered surgical specialties, such as otolaryngology and obstetrics and gynecology, scored Prestige and Scholarly Pursuits high and Lifestyle low.
- Students who entered other support specialties, such as anesthesiology and pathology, scored Lifestyle high and Service low.

In fact, you can incorporate your values into the practice of any specialty. So, consider your PVIPS results and how those values might be reflected in various work environments (e.g., research or community-based), activities or tasks (e.g., teaching medical students, providing medical care to the underserved, leading research teams, or serving on community boards), and geographic locations (i.e., rural, urban, suburban).

To explore more environments and activities that incorporate your core values, speak to your mentors and advisors. They can provide further context into the work activities and settings in residency and in practice that may be most fulfilling. You can also complete clerkship, elective, and research experiences in settings outside of traditional academic medical centers to preview other environments.

Q. How was the PVIPS developed?

The PVIPS was developed by Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine faculty Paul Hartung, Ph.D., and Mark L. Savickas, Ph.D. It follows a theoretical model well established in the field of vocational psychology. The scales were initially developed by a national panel of doctorate and medical doctor experts skilled in scale construction, with subsequent statement/ item development and analysis determining the 60 items. The structure and reliability of the PVIPS was established by administering the original items to medical students at ten U.S. medical schools. This first edition of the assessment was incorporated into the Careers in Medicine Web site in 2003. As students have completed the assessment, their results have been collected and stored in a database. This database, along with additional results gathered by administering the PVIPS to several physician populations, has helped the developers further refine the instrument.