

NATIONAL BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS®

Evaluation of Health Professionals



NBME™



NBME® Mission

To protect the health of the public through state of the art assessment of health professionals. While centered on the assessment of physicians, this mission encompasses the spectrum of health professionals along the continuum of education, training and practice that includes research in evaluation as well as development of assessment instruments.

High Quality Examinations Since 1915

The NBME, an independent, not-for-profit organization, was founded in 1915 in response to a need for a voluntary, nationwide examination that medical licensing authorities could accept as a standard for judging candidates for medical licensure. Since its founding, the NBME has continued without interruption to provide high quality examinations for this purpose and has become a model and a resource of international stature in testing methodologies and educational measurement.

The approximately 80 members of the National Board constitute its governing body. The membership is composed of representatives with responsibility and expertise in the health professions, medical education and evaluation, and medical practice, including representatives from test committees, national professional organizations, and the public.

Sponsorship of the United States Medical Licensing Examination™ (USMLE™)

The USMLE is a three-step examination for medical licensure in the United States. It is designed to assess a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to demonstrate fundamental patient-centered skills that are important in health and disease and that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care. The USMLE is sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and the NBME.

Services for Medical Schools

Subject Examination Program

The NBME offers standardized, objective discipline-based examinations for use in assessment throughout the medical school curriculum.

Developed by nationally-representative committees of content experts in the US, the examinations are designed to provide institutions with effective evaluation tools and useful examinee performance data that can be compared with a large, representative group of examinees at the same stage of training. Subject examinations are provided to all 125 allopathic US medical schools as well as a number of Canadian and osteopathic medical schools. In 1997, the NBME expanded the use of the subject examinations to include international medical schools and other institutions.

Customized Assessment Services

The NBME has completed pilot testing of a web-based system providing Customized Assessment Services, through which medical school faculty build examinations tailored to match the design of the individual school's curriculum. These examinations are assembled from a large pool of items covering the topics commonly taught and tested in basic science coursework. Examinations are then delivered using web-based test administration and proctoring software developed by the NBME. Annual subscriptions to Customized Assessment Services are now available. In the academic year 2007-2008, the NBME will restrict use of the program to 40 institutions on a first-come, first-serve basis. The program will be expanded to accommodate up to 60 schools for academic year 2008-2009.

Faculty Development Workshops

The NBME will plan and facilitate workshops for faculty interested in enhancing the quality of their multiple-choice items for use in their own examinations and programs. Guidance is also available

in other test development areas such as setting pass/fail standards and examination planning.

Web-Based Self-Assessment Services

The NBME offers web-based self-assessments for US and international medical students and graduates.

- The *Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment* uses multiple-choice items based on information typically covered during basic science medical education courses.
- The *Comprehensive Clinical Science Self-Assessment* uses multiple-choice items based on information typically covered during the core clinical clerkships.
- The *Comprehensive Clinical Medicine Self-Assessment* uses information typically covered in clinical encounters.



Participants receive immediate diagnostic feedback highlighting areas of strength and weakness. These self-assessments may be a valuable tool for anyone preparing to take USMLE.

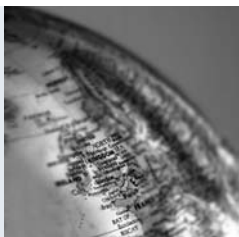
Services for Health Professional Organizations

The NBME provides testing, educational, consultative, and research services to a number of medical specialty boards, societies, and health sciences organizations. Services support development, administration, and analysis of more than 50 examination programs for certification, recertification, in-training, self-assessment, or evaluation of special competence. The NBME offers both consulting and full services to ensure that assessment programs follow a sound developmental model, and it reviews programs for incorporation of the latest statistical and technological developments.

Post-Licensure Assessment

The Post-Licensure Assessment System (PLAS) is a joint activity of the NBME and the FSMB. The PLAS provides comprehensive services to medical licensing authorities for use in assessing the ongoing competence of licensed or previously licensed physicians. PLAS comprises two independent yet complementary services, medical knowledge assessment resources (the Special Purpose Examination) and clinical competence assessment resources.

- The PLAS provides third party assessment programs with an in-depth analysis of physicians' clinical competency through use of a combination of standardized and personalized assessment tools.



International Collaborations

During the past several years, the NBME has also been exploring collaboration with international partners to help improve the assessment of health professionals outside the US and Canada. Interest in these activities has grown, resulting in a wide array of initiatives from psychometric consulting to full-service assessment programs. Additionally, the NBME has developed a fellowship program that allows international scholars to be exposed to an array of assessment activities through visits to the NBME in Philadelphia.

Center for Innovation

The NBME continually supports research in the fields of clinical skills assessment, advanced methods of testing, and ongoing studies of the validity and reliability of examination programs. The Center for Innovation, established in May 2001, is a unit of the NBME that is charged with development of new products and services and

exploration of new ventures that facilitate NBME's strategic vision and mission. The Center monitors relevant trends and technologies, implements proof-of-concept projects, and seeks collaboration with a variety of outside entities. Center projects have included development of an assessment system for medical professionalism and of infrastructure to support portfolio-based data sharing.

Stemmler Fund

Established in 1995, the Edward J. Stemmler Medical Education Research Fund assists research in topics relevant to the mission of the NBME. The 2006-2007 Stemmler Fund awards brought the current total of grants made by the program to \$4.1 million. A total of 59 grants have been made to 44 different medical schools for a broad range of important assessment research topics.

Additional Resources

The *NBME Annual Report*, the *NBME Examiner* (a biannual newsletter), and more information about the NBME and USMLE are available at the NBME and USMLE websites.



www.nbme.org



www.usmle.org

National Board of Medical Examiners

3750 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
USA
Phone: (215) 590-9500
E-mail: webmail@nbme.org

Copyright © 2005-2007 the National Board of Medical Examiners®

September 2007