



**The Edward J. Stemmler, M.D.
Medical Education Research Fund of NBME®**

Letter of Intent: Content and Formatting Guidelines

The Letter of Intent (LOI) must follow the format below to provide a structured and succinct overview of your research. The document should contain no more than 1,500 words; sections 2 and 3 require the most careful explanation and therefore should comprise the majority of the word count. You may include up to two appendices if they are critical to understanding your research; these will not be included in the word count.

When your LOI is complete, follow the instructions for “**Submitting your completed LOI**”.

1. Study Purpose and Research Objectives

Include a concise statement describing the fundamental purpose of the research project and the specific research problem(s) that will be addressed. The purpose statement should be followed by one or more research questions, one or more hypotheses to be tested, or the specific project objectives and deliverables.

The following is an example of a purpose statement and research questions from a prior project. It is not necessary that you follow this same format, but your statements should be similarly concise and explicit.

- *The purpose of this research is to determine whether a case diagramming technique can be used to assess students’ clinical reasoning with respect to the concepts taught in an integrated course on mechanisms of disease. Two research questions will be addressed: (1) Are scores based on a case-diagramming tool sufficiently reliable for classroom use? (2) Do scores on the case diagramming tool measure clinical reasoning more effectively than standard multiple-choice questions?*

2. Background and Rationale

Specify the reasons for conducting the research in light of current knowledge. This description serves to put the research project in context and should be similar to the introduction in a research paper. Your description should address these questions:

- *What important assessment-related problem is the project addressing?*
- *Why should this specific project be done?*
- *What is innovative about this project?*
- *What will be the impact of this project on assessment in medical education?*

A list of up to 10 references can be included in this section. References are excluded from the word count.

3. Design, Methods, and Analysis

Clearly describe the overall study design including, as appropriate, the study participants, assessment or measurement procedures, data collection methods, and the analytic procedures that will be used to address each of the research questions. This section carries considerable weight during the review process, so including an expert in research methodology on the team is strongly recommended.

4. Qualifications and Roles of Research Team Members

List the key members of the research team (including consultants) and their institutional affiliations. The qualifications of each person should be noted, as well as his or her specific contribution to your project. It is important to ensure that assessment and methodological expertise is represented on the team, so be sure to identify the team members who contribute those skills. Each project team is required to include an individual new or early in the medical education research field who can be mentored by the Primary Investigator or other team members to develop a deeper understanding of medical education research.

5. Response to Previous Committee Feedback (*resubmissions only*)

Address any feedback you received from the Stemmler Committee on a previously submitted LOI or Invited Proposal. You may use up to an additional 300 words beyond the 1,500 word limit.

Submitting your completed LOI

All documents uploaded should be in PDF format and submitted as one document.

If you have NOT entered your LOI information online, go to the [Stemmler portal](#) and click on the *Letter of Intent Instructions* menu option, then select the *Submit New LOI* button. Complete the form and follow the instructions for uploading attachments.

If you have already completed the LOI form online, you may upload/attach your LOI by returning to the [Stemmler portal](#) and clicking *My Projects* to locate your submission.