



## NBME Emerging Innovators Grant Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. **What is the purpose of this grant program?**

The Emerging Innovators Grant Program is designed to empower early- to mid-career faculty, researchers, and program leaders to explore their visionary ideas and make a lasting impact on the medical education landscape. Projects should adhere to the theme for the call for proposals and may be submitted as research or implementation projects across the spectrum of medical education.

#### 2. **What is the focus area for the grant program?**

The 2026 call for proposals focuses on the theme of *Promoting Equitable and Innovative Assessment in Medical Education*. **Proposals must focus on advancing equity, innovation, or both in assessment and medical education.** Thematic alignment will be considered when evaluating the proposals.

We are seeking proposals that advance **one or more** of the following:

- Designing assessments that create a novel approach to measuring specific competencies.
- Creating high-quality assessment processes that support fair and consistent assessment experiences.
- Assessing the implementation of a novel program of instruction and/or assessment.

We encourage proposals from individuals and/or teams which include individuals who are underrepresented in medicine. Teams are encouraged to include learners or trainees among the membership.

#### 3. **Who is eligible to apply for this grant?**

We aim to support the professional development and the work of early- and mid-career researchers, medical education faculty, and/or medical education staff. This includes, but is not limited to, assistant professors, non-tenured faculty, and administrative roles. Grants will be awarded to medical schools accredited by the LCME or the AOA/COCA or graduate medical education (GME) training facilities. Applications are accepted from principal investigators (PI) with appointments at LCME- and AOA/COCA-accredited medical schools or GME facilities.

Early-career applicants are strongly encouraged to identify a mentor within the research team; all applicants are encouraged to include one or more learners/trainees to introduce them to assessment research and program improvement concepts. Teams may have one or more mentor/mentee partnerships.

#### 4. **What types of projects or initiatives does this grant support?**

The Emerging Innovators Grant Program will fund both research and program implementation proposals to advance equity and/or innovation in assessment and medical education. For this grant program, NBME views equity and innovation within medical education and assessment broadly to encourage creativity in the proposal design, allowing individuals and teams to determine the most

meaningful ways to pursue and investigate change. All projects should address the theme of the current call for proposals: *Promoting Equitable and Innovative Assessment in Medical Education*. Projects focused on implementation should have a pre/post-evaluation component.

**5. What is the maximum amount of funding that can be requested?**

The Emerging Innovators Grant Program will fund up to \$25,000 in total for each accepted proposal. Four proposals that can be completed within a 1-2-year timeframe will be selected. The maximum funding amount remains the same regardless of the project schedule.

**6. What is the deadline for submitting a proposal?**

Proposals will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on **Monday, June 15, 2026**.

**7. How long does it take to receive a decision on a proposal?**

Notifications of funding decisions will be made in the fall of 2026 with the goal of disbursing funds in December 2026.

**8. What do I need to submit in my proposal?**

Proposals will include the following elements:

- Abstract (350 words) which summarizes the project.
- Statement of the problem being addressed or investigated, including literature review and any existing pilot data.
- Specific aims and methods of the proposed project.
- Anticipated outcomes and impact.
  - For program implementation proposals, please include information on intended program evaluation.
- Potential for sustainability and/or scalability at the end of the funding period.
- Research or project implementation plan, including timeline, 2-year maximum.
- Existing IRB approvals or any IRB applications in process, as applicable.
- Itemized Budget, limited to 10% indirect costs.
- Biographical sketch/curriculum vitae of PI and associated team.
- At least one letter of support from institutional leadership (e.g., Division/Department Director, Dean, other program leader, etc.). Letters should convey leadership support for the project and address PI's available time to complete the project.
- Identification of mentors/mentees, as applicable.

**9. What are the criteria used to evaluate proposals?**

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Thematic alignment to the call for proposals.
- The potential to address outcomes related to the cycle's theme.
- Feasibility of achieving the project's intended aims, including demonstration of the appropriate skill level of the proposed team, available technology, mentorship, resources, and program evaluation plan.
- Potential for meaningful impact at the institution and beyond, including scalability within medical education.
- Collaboration among departments (disciplines), faculty members, or institutions.

**10. How will I know if my proposal has been accepted or rejected?**

As a first step in the process, the NBME proposal management software will send an automatic confirmation upon successful submission. After proposal review, funding decisions will be communicated to applicants via the email address [NBMEInnovatorsGrants@nbme.org](mailto:NBMEInnovatorsGrants@nbme.org). Any questions you may have during the application process may also be directed to this email address.

**11. What are the reporting requirements if I receive a grant?**

The PI will be required to submit a report at the grant period's end. For projects that require more than one year of work, an interim report will be required after 1 year. Additionally, the research team may be asked to present their findings to NBME staff and/or the medical education community.

**12. Can I apply for this grant program more than once? Can an institution have more than one grant proposal submitted at the same time?**

An individual may not be principal investigator on more than one application but may appear on more than one team. There is no limit to the number of applications from a single institution, provided they are distinct projects with independent PIs.

**13. Are there any limits on indirect expenses?**

Yes. Indirect costs are limited to 10% of the total grant budget.

**14. Can I apply for this grant program if the research will be completed in 3 years? Should I apply if my research needs less than \$25,000 of support?**

The grant timeline should present a clear goal with achievable results within a 1-2-year timeframe. Projects that require more than 2 years will not be considered. NBME will consider proposals seeking less than \$25,000.

**15. Are there any limitations to what the grant can and cannot fund?**

As part of NBME's Community Collaborations and Contributions programs, the Emerging Innovators Grant Program supports the medical education and assessment communities to drive future innovations. The Program is not intended to support work to develop commercialized assessment products or services. The Emerging Innovators Grant Program selection committee will not consider any such proposals for funding.

**16. Are there any limitations on eligibility?**

This program is currently open only to principal investigators with appointments at LCME- and AOA/COCA-accredited medical schools.

NBME staff members are not eligible to apply. Members of NBME's Board of Directors and Council are not eligible as PIs but may serve another role on a research or implementation team, such as mentor.

**17. When will the next call for proposals be announced?**

The next call for proposals will take place in early 2026.

**18. Are there any specific guidelines or requirements for acknowledgment or publicity if awarded the grant?**

Yes. Grant recipients will receive communications guidelines for acknowledging NBME's funding and may be invited to present their work at an NBME meeting or another event.