

NBME Item-Writing Workshops

Learn More about This Service



NBME has been developing test items (questions) and examinations for licensure and other assessment purposes since 1915. NBME staff includes internationally recognized experts in the field of test development and assessment, psychometrics, and medical education research. For more than 25 years, members of NBME's professional test development team have served as a resource to faculty at medical schools and other health profession organizations wishing to improve their item-writing techniques.

NBME offers workshops to help medical school faculty and other health professionals to enhance the quality of their multiple-choice questions (MCQs) for use on their own examinations and programs. NBME professionals will facilitate a workshop specific to the needs of your school or assessment body, tailoring examples and exercises to align with your healthcare discipline(s).

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- Learn practical methods that promote versatility in MCQ writing and use
- Distinguish MCQs requiring simple recall from those requiring critical thinking and application of knowledge
- Identify and correct common MCQ flaws, including irrelevant difficulty and clues that benefit test-wise examinees
- Write, review, and revise MCQs that focus on application of knowledge and cover topic areas in both clinical and foundational sciences

BENEFITS

- New item writers will learn to write, review, and refine MCQs in single-best-answer formats.
- Experienced item writers will benefit from a useful refresher course and an opportunity to learn new skills.
- All participants will learn techniques to improve their item-writing efficiency and increase the quality and number of items they write.
- Educators from different disciplines and backgrounds can participate in the same workshop, promoting valuable cross-discipline and collegial exchange.
- Participants can choose their own path: new item writers can do a deep dive into preworkshop materials, while experienced item writers can pick and choose topics to design their own refresher course.
- Participants will have access to the NBME Item-Writing Guide, a reference that can be utilized after workshop.
- Participants will receive supportive materials, including a vignette template and quick reference guides.
- Participants will receive feedback during the workshop from peers and NBME professionals.

WORKSHOP DELIVERY

Item-Writing Workshops can be delivered remotely or in-person for groups of any size for medical schools and other health profession organizations. NBME also offers a workshop for those who want to participate as an individual through open enrollment.

FOR INSTITUTIONS

Remote Delivery Overview

- Participants will complete 1 to 1.5 hours of prework, including watching a series of microlearning videos, completing structured activities, and writing a new item or reviewing and revising an existing item
- NBME professionals will conduct a 2.5-hour workshop via video conferencing software with participants, including small group review/revision of items, large group review, and time for discussion

Best for ...

- Smaller groups (<50 participants)
- Multiple satellite campuses
- Budgetary or deadline constraints that might preclude travel or advanced notice for scheduling

In-Person Delivery Overview

- Participants will complete 1 to 1.5 hours of prework, including watching a series of microlearning videos, completing structured activities, and writing a new item or reviewing and revising an existing item
- NBME professionals will conduct a 3-hour in-person workshop, including small group review/revision of items, large group review, and ample time for discussion
- NBME professionals on hand to answer any and all questions

Best for ...

- Any group size
- Campuses with many faculty members or an in-person conference of health professionals
- Substantial collaboration and community building through in-person exercises and discussions
- Workshops planned with at least 2 months' advanced notice

Visit <https://www.nbme.org/item-writing-workshops-request> to request a workshop for your institution.

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Open-Enrollment Workshop Overview (Remote)

- Details are the same as our remote delivery workshop for institutions.
- Offered three times throughout the year
- Participants comprise individuals from across institutions, educational backgrounds, and health professions

Best for ...

- Individuals seeking to improve their item writing
- Anyone seeking to try out the workshop before scheduling for a group
- New and experienced item writers
- Professionals working in health sciences or medical editing

[Register here](#) for a workshop as an individual through open enrollment.

To learn more about NBME workshops and consultancy, visit <https://www.nbme.org/services/nbme-workshops-consultancy>.