

National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME)

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History of the National Board of Medical Examiners

The NBME is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides high-quality examinations for the health professions. Its mission is to protect the health of the public through state of the art assessment, and it also has a major commitment to research and development in evaluation and measurement. The NBME was founded in 1915 because of the need for a voluntary, nationwide examination that medical licensing authorities could accept as the standard by which to judge candidates for medical licensure. Since that time, it 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 evaluation in medicine.

United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE)

The USMLE assesses a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to demonstrate fundamental patient-centered skills, that are in health and disease and that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care. Results of the USMLE are reported to medical licensing authorities in the United States for their use in granting the initial license to practice medicine. The USMLE is co-sponsored and co-owned by the NBME and the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB). It is administered in three steps: Step 1; Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) and Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS); and Step 3.

Other NBME Programs and Services

The NBME provides subject examinations in areas covering basic science and clinical science disciplines. These secure, nationally norm referenced examinations are appropriate for administration as end-of-course or end-of-clerkship assessments and are provided to medical schools in the United States and internationally.

The NBME provides testing, educational, consultative, and research services to a number of medical specialty boards, societies, and health sciences organizations. Services include developing, administering, and analyzing examinations for certification, recertification, in-training, self-assessment, or evaluation of special competence.

The NBME also offers web-based self-assessments for US and international medical students and graduates. The self-assessments cover content in the areas of basic science, clinical science, and clinical medicine.

The Post-Licensure Assessment System (PLAS) is a joint activity of the NBME and FSMB and was developed to assist medical licensing authorities in assessing licensed or previously licensed physicians who have already been licensed. The PLAS includes the Special Purpose Examination (SPEX) and the Assessment Center Program.

Legal Ramifications

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