

Joe E. Covington Award for Research on Testing for Licensure 2021 Call for Proposals

The National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) announces the 2021 Covington Award for Research on Testing for Licensure. The award honors Joe E. Covington, a former dean of the University of Missouri–Columbia School of Law who was the first Director of Testing for NCBE. The Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) was created and launched largely through his vision and perseverance.

The award is intended to provide support for graduate students in any discipline doing research germane to testing and measurement, particularly in a high-stakes licensure setting. While research or a literature review on any issue in testing will be considered, this year we are especially interested in any of the following topics:

- Analysis of the cognitive processes underlying performance on the bar examination.
- Reference group definitions and their impact on linking, scaling, and equating
- Methods for linking performance assessments in licensure testing
- Methods for grading, modeling, and scoring performance assessments
- Methods for providing diagnostic information from performance on a licensure exam
- Systematic review of the validity evidence in support of licensing and certification exams.

Each recipient is expected to work with a faculty advisor at his or her institution and with staff at NCBE to complete a project over a period of about six months; the exact time frame is flexible and can include the summer (for students seeking summer support). The proposed project need not focus on licensure testing, but relevance to bar examinations will be a consideration in final selection.

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The student conducting the research must be enrolled in a doctoral program and have completed a minimum of one year of study toward the Ph.D. Students who are just completing their Ph.D. are also eligible. The faculty advisor must be willing to work with the student on the project and supervise the student's progress. Each recipient will be awarded a stipend of \$6,000, and the advisor will be awarded a stipend of \$1,000.

We expect most studies to be fairly modest in scope or to be a part of a larger study, so that they can be completed in about six months. More than one award may be made in a given year.

The application should include (1) the student's curriculum vita, (2) a letter of intent from the student's project advisor, (3) a brief proposal of up to four pages (this may be very brief for those proposing a literature review), (4) a recent scholarly writing sample, and (5) a cover letter to Dr. Mark Albanese at the address given below, to be received by Friday, November 6, 2020. The award committee will review all applications and will make the award(s) by March 1, 2021.

Submissions and questions should be addressed to:

Dr. Mark A. Albanese
Director of Testing and Research
National Conference of Bar Examiners
302 South Bedford St.
Madison, WI 53703-3622

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Facsimile: (608) 442-7974
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NCBE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withhold the award for any year in which the Covington Award Committee determines that none of the submissions merits the award.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners is a not-for-profit corporation founded in 1931. The mission of the Conference is to work with other institutions to develop, maintain, and apply reasonable and uniform standards of education and character for eligibility for admission to the practice of law; and to assist bar admission authorities by providing standardized examinations of uniform and high quality for the testing of applicants for admission to the practice of law, disseminating relevant information concerning admission standards and practices, conducting educational programs for the members and staffs of such authorities, and providing other services such as character and fitness investigations and research.