

# Request for Proposals for Research Related to the NCLEX®

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## Guidelines for Proposal Submission to the Joint Research Committee (JRC)

National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.  
NCSBN

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# Program Description

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) and Pearson VUE Joint Research Committee (JRC) invites proposals for research related to the NCLEX examination program. The JRC develops a research agenda to directly benefit the NCLEX examination program and facilitate the execution of that research. To this end, the JRC solicits and reviews research proposals that address this type of research. Of these proposals, those with the most direct benefit are funded. The JRC does not provide funding for research that is only tangentially related to NCLEX or is primarily about nursing or education issues.

## JRC Background

The JRC is a committee composed of NCSBN staff, staff from our contracted testing service (Pearson-VUE) and selected external researchers. The committee was formed to encourage research that supports the continued use of the NCLEX examinations for initial licensure or that supports potential enhancements to the NCLEX process.

### **About the NCSBN**

Nearly 100 years ago, boards of nursing were established by state governments to protect the public's health by overseeing and ensuring the safe practice of nursing. Boards of nursing (BON) achieve this mission by establishing the standards for safe nursing care and issuing licenses to practice nursing. Once a license is issued, the board's job continues by monitoring licensees' compliance to state laws and taking action against the licenses of those nurses who have exhibited unsafe nursing practice.

The BONs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and four United States territories--Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands--comprise the membership of NCSBN. The purpose of NCSBN is to provide an organization through which BONs act and counsel together on matters of common interest and concern affecting the public health, safety and welfare, including the development of entry-level, nurse licensing examinations. NCSBN's programs and services include developing the NCLEX-RN® and NCLEX-PN® examinations.

### **Governance of the NCSBN**

The policy-making body of NCSBN is its Delegate Assembly, which is composed of two representatives from each Member Board of nursing. Once a year, delegates from the Member Boards convene in a Delegate Assembly to determine the direction and policies of NCSBN and to elect individuals to NCSBN's Board of Directors. Between annual meetings of the Delegate Assembly, a nine-member, elected Board of Directors is charged with overseeing implementation of policy and directing the activities of NCSBN.

In addition to the Board of Directors, there are several standing committees and several special committees that are charged with specific initiatives and objectives. Almost all of these committees are composed of BON staff or BON board members. The JRC is the exception.

## Eligibility

The NCSBN welcomes proposals from institutions of higher education; public and private organizations, institutions, and agencies; and individuals. Affiliation or partnership with a university or nursing school is not required. While graduate students typically may not serve as Principal Investigator (PI), they are encouraged to propose projects with a faculty member who would serve as PI.

# Funding Guidelines

## Project Categories

The JRC provides various levels of funding dependant on the complexity of the request and the research design.

## Allowable Funding

The JRC may reimburse expenses directly related to conducting the project. Examples of these expenses include: researcher's time, consultant's time, graduate student's salary (if it is part of a graduate assistantship the cost of some benefits can be included, such as, health-care insurance, etc.), project-related travel, equipment and software, etc. Equipment and software purchased with JRC funds become the property of NCSBN, unless otherwise negotiated.

The JRC may not reimburse expenses that are not directly related to conducting the project. Indirect costs or other overhead charges are examples of non-reimbursable expenses. (If you are uncertain whether an expense is reimbursable, please contact NCSBN's Associate Director of NCLEX Examinations).

# Award Terms & Conditions

All research conducted and reports provided become the exclusive property of NCSBN. In alignment with NCSBN's corporate values, this research program will support collaboration through the selective dissemination of research results to the external scholarly community. While researchers will be encouraged to submit their research for publication, they must first obtain specific, written permission for each presentation or publication they wish to submit.

## Confidentiality Requirements

Before researchers are granted access to NCSBN data, they must agree in writing that they will neither release nor publish the data or results of research based upon that data without the permission of NCSBN. A signed Confidentiality Agreement must be submitted upon receipt of a letter from NCSBN.

## Timeline Requirements

Proposal acceptance includes agreement on a specified timeline and schedule of deliverables. Researchers will be asked to present a progress report every six months at the JRC meetings.

If the original project completion date is exceeded, researchers must apply for a re-authorization to continue. This application will be negotiated with NSCBN. NCSBN reserves the right to terminate a project that is not completed within the agreed-upon timeframe.

# Grant Process

## Award Cycle

The JRC meets twice a year, in March and August. Typically, the agenda for each meeting includes the review of proposals, presentations of completed research, updates on in-progress research, discussion of future research topics, discussions on how to solicit future research and plans for future meetings.

To have your proposal considered, it should be submitted by **February 1** for the spring funding cycle or **July 1** for the fall funding cycle. Proposals received after February 1 or July 1 may have to be deferred to the next funding cycle.

### **Payments**

Funds are typically dispersed upon completion of the project and approval of the final report. Alternative payment schedules may be considered for projects that might involve large up-front expenses.

### **Research Agenda**

The JRC develops and maintains a research agenda, which is posted on the NCSBN website. This agenda is reviewed periodically and updated based on any substantial changes.

### **Final Research Reports**

Upon completion of the research project, grantees are required to submit a final research report, in electronic format. This will facilitate the dissemination of the results as part of the NCLEX Research Report Series. Research reports may be posted on the NCSBN website at the discretion of NCSBN.

Research reports funded by the JRC become the exclusive property of NCSBN. Before researchers are granted access to NCSBN data, they must agree in writing that they will neither release nor publish the data or results of research based upon that data without the specific, written permission of NCSBN.

## **Proposal Preparation Instructions**

Proposals must be submitted electronically. All proposals must include: title page form, project summary, proposal narrative, timeline, vitae for project personnel, budget summary form and budget narrative. Detailed instructions for each of these pieces are provided below. A signed Confidentiality Agreement is also required upon acceptance of the proposal and a letter from NCSBN.

Researchers may provide other relevant information, including pertinent exhibits, but each proposal must be a self-contained document.

Only the materials included in the proposal at the time of submission will be sent to the review panel.

Proposals may be rejected without review by the JRC if they do not appear to be related to supporting the current use of or provide possible future enhancements.

### **Proposal Format**

The NCSBN believes that our reviewers will be able to conduct the highest quality review when proposals are concise and easy to read. Therefore, we request those submitting proposals strictly adhere to the following specifications:

1. All elements (except for the Curriculum Vitae and the Confidentiality Agreement) should be included in one file, in either Microsoft Word or Adobe (PDF) formats.
2. 12-point Times New Roman font
3. Double-spaced
4. One-inch margins at the top, bottom, and on both sides
5. Pages numbered consecutively

## Proposal Contents

The JRC believes that strong proposals will clearly address each of the selection criteria outlined in the *Proposal Evaluation and Selection* section of this Request for Proposals. Strong proposals also will make well-reasoned and compelling cases for the significance of the questions or issues that will be the subject of the proposed research, and present research designs that are complete, clearly delineated, and incorporate sound research methods. In addition, the personnel descriptions included in strong proposals will make it apparent that the principal investigator(s), and other key personnel possess training and experience commensurate with their duties.

All proposals should include:

- **Cover Page**

Use the Cover Page Template as the cover for your proposal. This template is included in Appendix A of this document, and is also available on our website.

- **Project Summary**

The project summary should contain the following:

- (1) a description of the question or issue being addressed and why that is important
- (2) a summary of the methodology being used and why that approach will yield the intended results, and
- (3) the intended results or outcomes of the work and a summary of why those results or outcomes are important to the NCLEX examination program.

If your proposed research project is funded, this summary may be used by the JRC in various publications as a description of your project. It may also be the basis of a public announcement about the funds awarded for the project.

- **Proposal Narrative**

The project narrative should not exceed the equivalent of 12 double-spaced pages. Reviewers have the discretion to ignore material on pages 13 or higher.

The narrative should address the following:

- 1) The research question and its significance to the JRC Research Agenda;
- 2) A review of the pertinent literature that provides a rationale for the proposal;
- 3) Description of the methods and analytical techniques; and
- 4) Importance of findings for the NCLEX examination program.

- **Project Timeline**

In order for the JRC to evaluate the likelihood for the proposed project to be completed within the desired timeframe, all submissions should include a project timeline. This timeline does not count against the 12 page limit of the proposal narrative. The timeline should include a schedule of deliverables. The timeline will be used to establish a completion date for the project. If the project cannot be completed within the approved timeline, researchers must apply for a re-authorization to continue.

- **Budget Summary and Budget Justification Narrative**

A complete budget for the project must be included (use the Budget Summary Form in Appendix A of this package, or a comparable table). The budget summary and budget justification narrative do not count against the 12-page limitation of the proposal narrative.

The budget should be clearly delineated and warranted in terms of the proposed activities. It

will be important to indicate that the amount of funding requested is reasonable.

Purchases of computer hardware and software are discouraged. If they are required for the project, they become property of NCSBN upon completion of the project.

- **Project Personnel**

Include abbreviated biographical information for the principal investigator(s) and other key personnel. Curriculum vitae should be included in a single document, separate from the rest of the proposal. Vitae do not count against the 12-page limitation of the proposal narrative.

## Proposal Evaluation & Selection

Proposals that are submitted are subjected to a two-stage review. The initial review is performed by NCSBN staff and acts as a preliminary screening. In this stage, the proposals are reviewed for:

- 1) Adequacy and completeness of the proposal. This includes issues of format and verification that the essential components of the proposal are present.
  - a. When incomplete or incomprehensible proposals are received, they will be returned to the author with a brief explanation of the reason.
- 2) General appropriateness of the proposal. Proposals that do not have a clear benefit to the NCLEX examination program will be summarily excluded from further consideration.
  - a. Proposals that address topics that are primarily about nursing issues and do not have a clear and specific expected benefit to the NCLEX will not be considered for funding.

In the second stage of the review process, proposals are reviewed at the semi-annual meetings of the JRC. Council members are asked to consider the proposal's utility to the NCLEX exam program, feasibility, adherence with the JRC's research agenda, appropriateness of the budget, quality of the research design, and credibility of the researchers.

### **Importance of the Research**

In determining the importance of the proposed project, the reviewers will consider the importance of the question or issue to be addressed especially with regard to the potential contribution the results will have for supporting or enhancing the NCLEX examination.

### **Quality of the Research Design**

In determining the quality of the proposed research design, the reviewers will consider the following factors:

- whether a specific research design has been proposed, and the quality and appropriateness of that design, including the scientific rigor of the studies involved.
- the extent to which the research design includes a high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for research activities, and the use of appropriate theoretical and methodological tools.
- the likelihood of the resulting research being of publishable quality

### **Quality and Potential Contributions of the Project Personnel**

In determining the quality and potential contribution of the proposed project personnel, the

reviewers will consider the qualifications, including training and experience, of:

- the principal investigator(s);
- key project personnel; and
- any proposed consultants or subcontractors.

## Submission Instructions

### Electronic Submission

All proposals must be sent via e-mail as Microsoft Word documents or Adobe pdf files to [toneill@ncsbn.org](mailto:toneill@ncsbn.org). Proposals submitted in paper format will not be accepted.

### Proposal Checklist

The proposal should include the following pieces (see the appendices for samples and templates).

- Email with two attached Adobe PDF or Word files

*File One to include:*

- Cover Page
- Project Summary
- Proposal Narrative
- Project Timeline
- Budget Summary
- Budget Justification Narrative

*File Two to include:*

- Curriculum vitae of the principal investigator(s) and key personnel

### Notification of Proposal Receipt

Once your electronic submission has been received by the NCSBN, you will be emailed a Notification of Proposal Receipt.

### Confidentiality Agreement

If your proposal is accepted, you will be asked to complete a Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix D).

## Contact Information

For additional information or clarification about this submission process, please contact:

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