

The Assessment of Professional Behaviors (APB) Program

A developmental program of the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME®)
<http://professionalbehaviors.nbme.org>

The APB uses a multisource feedback instrument to assess the extent to which physicians and physician trainees display the professional behaviors that are essential for the provision of safe, effective and ethical health care.

Multisource feedback (also known as 360 feedback) is a process in which individuals are evaluated by supervisors, subordinates, peers and others. For the APB, evaluators (observers) may be any combination of students, residents, faculty, nurses, other healthcare providers, and administrative staff.

The APB emphasizes observable behaviors rather than attitudes or motivations. The focus is on those behaviors that support positive outcomes such as improved experience of care, increased adherence to treatment recommendations, and improved patient safety.

The resulting feedback reports help recipients gain insight into their strengths and developmental needs, and lead behavioral change. In the aggregate, these feedback reports may provide a basis for evaluating system-wide strengths and weaknesses.

The APB Program includes:

- A multisource feedback instrument developed through expert review and research
 - Training for program leaders, raters, and feedback providers
 - A secure Web-based survey delivery system that works through selected software systems
 - Easy-to-read graphical feedback reports
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Elements of the APB survey instrument

- 25 behavioral items rated on a five-point frequency scale
- One global evaluation item
- Two free-text comment areas to record behaviors that merit commendation and behaviors that may be a focus for improvement

Key participants in the APB program

- **Observees** are the recipients of APB feedback. They may be residents, fellows or faculty.
 - **Observers** are those who evaluate observees using the APB instrument. Observers may include students, residents/fellows, faculty, nurses, other health care providers, and administrative staff.
 - **Feedback Providers** are those who review APB feedback with the observee and assist in improvement planning. They are typically faculty who serve in a mentorship role.
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The APB addresses many of the ACGME competencies:

