

An Overview of NCME Sponsorship, Approval, and
Endorsement of Products

Sponsorship by NCME does not denote approval, formal endorsement, or agreement with project outcomes. Rather, sponsorship indicates that NCME supports the objective of a product or activity due to its alignment with the mission of NCME – the work may advance the field of educational measurement. It may take the form of verbal recognition, monetary support, or professional effort among member(s). In August 2008, the NCME Board approved the following official definition of NCME Sponsorship: “Sponsorship is support for a product or activity that is consistent with that of NCME. Sponsorship does not constitute a formal endorsement or approval of the project or the outcomes of the project by NCME.”

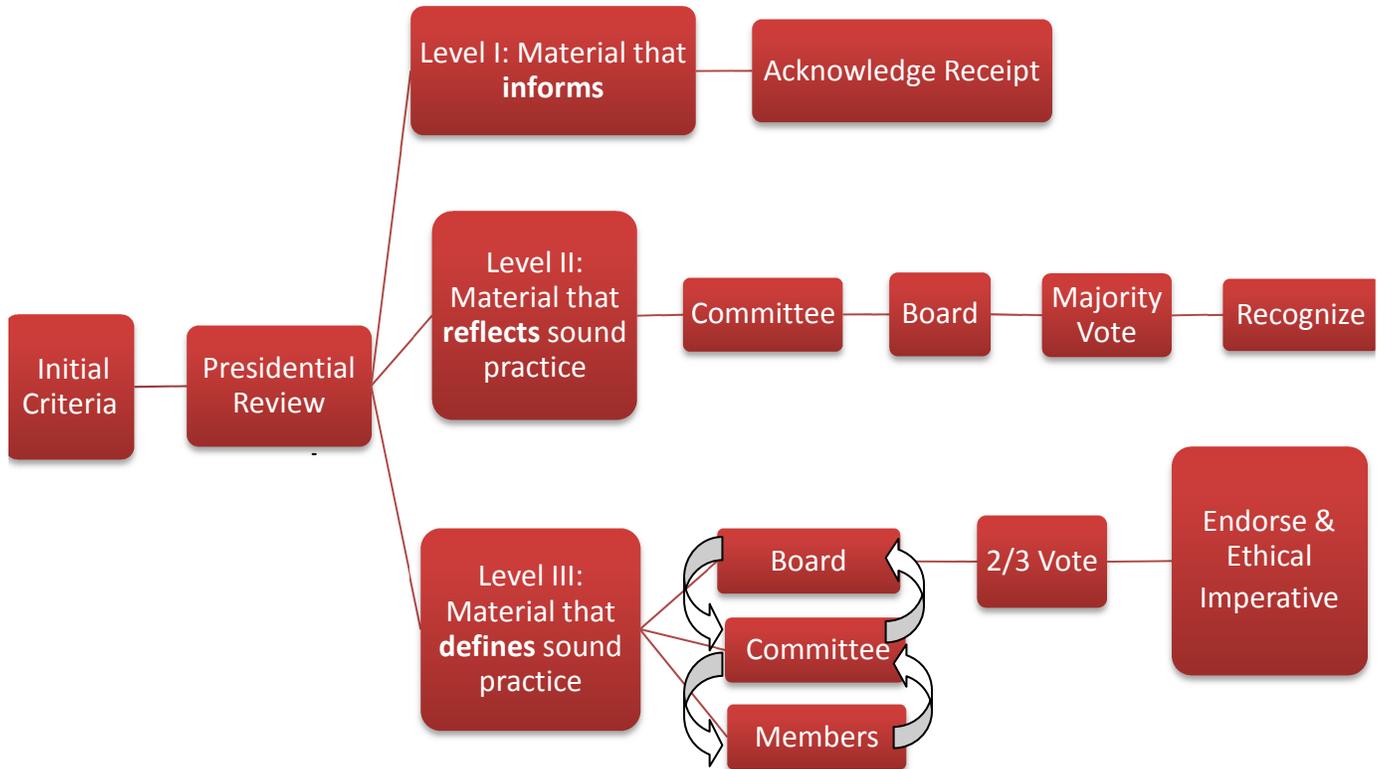
In contrast to NCME Sponsorship, NCME Approval constitutes a formal classification. Alternately stated, document evaluation by NCME is not a dichotomous decision; products, standards, or guidelines under evaluation ultimately receive an Approval Level – I, II or III. The level awarded facilitates interpretation. It denotes the purpose of the work, extent to which NCME was involved in its development, and the degree to which the Council has reviewed the material. Moreover, it may provide practitioners with an ‘adherence indicator.’ That is, a product, standard, or guideline, which has earned the highest NCME Approval Level, should be acknowledged, understood, and incorporated into one’s professional milieu.

According to the *NCME Review and Approval Process*, formulated in 1997, a document must meet initial criteria prior to advancing into the review process. While the initial criteria are presented within the NCME Handbook, they are offered here to clarify the procedure in its entirety.

The product, standard, or guideline must:

- 1) be relevant to the mission of NCME
- 2) be relevant to the practice of NCME members
- 3) take a practical and reasonable approach to measurement issues
- 4) be consistent with prevailing standards of technical quality in the profession
- 5) be consistent with the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*

Once deemed credible, a document is evaluated by one or more of the following: the President, Board, standing/ad hoc committee, or all NCME members. The diagram and definitions, presented below, provide an overview of the review process as well as depict the degree of NCME recognition that the product, standard, or guideline may receive.



Level I: Acknowledgement of Receipt

Standards, guidelines, or products that are classified within Level I generally relate to emergent demands or elucidate specific measurement issues—they are developed to facilitate discussion and/or provide information. Typically, documents that enter the Review Process under Approval Level I, are remitted to NCME by external organizations or authors; they are commonly unsolicited. Once the NCME President receives the material, he/she may choose to acknowledge receipt and announce the availability of it to the Board. However, the product, standards, or guidelines do not progress on to a full NCME Board Review. The official statement provided to those who petition NCME for a declaration regarding their publication, and receive an Approval Level I, follows; “This acknowledgement implies neither endorsement nor approval by the NCME Board. The opinions conveyed do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Board.”

Level II: Board Recognition

Materials that reflect sound measurement practice, either solicited or unsolicited, may enter into the Review Process for potential Level II Approval. In this instance, the President reviews the material. Subsequently, he/she deems it necessary to forward on to a committee--standing or purposely convened--for an in-depth evaluation. Upon receipt of the committee recommendation(s), the Board must vote to determine if the product, standards, or guidelines warrant the distinction of ‘good measurement practice.’ If the majority of the Board has voted in favor of this recognition, the availability of the publication may be announced and/or the work may be made available to NCME members. The formal NCME statement offered to a work that

has earned the Approval Level II distinction follows; “The NCME Board recognizes these materials as being consistent with sound measurement practice.” If the majority of the Board members do not vote in favor of Level II Approval, the Board may choose to offer the product a Level I Acknowledgement of Receipt.

Level III: NCME Endorsement

While individual NCME members or council representatives *may* serve on the development team for informational (i.e., Level I) or reflective (i.e., Level II) documents; Level III products, standards, or guidelines *must* be developed with significant input by representatives of NCME. Furthermore, all NCME members must have an opportunity to review the material and offer feedback prior to formal LEVEL III Approval. Documents considered under Level III are characterized by their intent. They seek to *define* technically sound professional practice. Therefore, if endorsed, all NCME members will be expected to adhere to the published standards or guidelines.

The review process for a Level III work is iterative. It is reviewed by the President, Board, standing/assembled committee, and members. Relevant feedback, from all parties, is incorporated into the publication. Once the review period has closed, the final document is brought up for a vote by the NCME Board. Endorsement must be supported by at least 2/3 of the Board. If a publication receives Level III Approval, the following statement is issued; “This document has been endorsed by NCME and this endorsement carries with it an ethical imperative for all NCME members to abide by these standards in the practice of measurement.” If the work fails to secure support by 2/3 of the Board, the Board may consider the publication for Level II Approval.