

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Eligibility

What might make an IME application ineligible for support?

Certain items may render an IME application ineligible for support, including but not limited to:

- Completed grant application submitted less than 60 calendar days prior to the activity start date
- Activity has already occurred
- Application is for support or dissemination of materials that have already been developed
- Activity was previously submitted, and the provider has received a decline for funding
- Objectives, Agenda, or Activity Description identify brand or generic drug names, or product-specific clinical trials (for example, KEYNOTE trials)
- Confirmed or potential faculty, chairpersons, or planning committee members names associated with the activity are listed in the application or shared with Our Company
- Activity relates to a therapeutic area or healthcare topic that differs from those that Our Company has prioritized for support
- Requested funding is for ineligible expenses
- Activity does not have an educational focus
- Activity is competing with or includes recreational activities
- Activity involves a religious, political, lobbying, fraternal, or social organization or purpose
- Any associated materials or related communications are provided to an employee of Our Company outside the Grant Management System or grant application (e.g., emails, file attachments, uploaded documents, detailed agendas) relevant to a grant request under consideration which introduces or includes details or information that does not align with the submission criteria and/or independence criteria of Our Company

What is the deadline to submit an Independent Medical Education (IME) grant application?

Grant applications MUST be received at least 60 calendar days before the start date of the activity. Only complete applications submitted via the Grant Management System will be considered for funding. We are unable to accommodate exceptions to this process.

Prepare for Submission

What materials and documents will I need in order to submit my application?

The following information is required for an Independent Medical Education application:

- Organizational Information
- Key organization executives and their affiliations
- Organization's By-Laws or Charters
- Organization's Conflict of Interest Policy
- Most recent Annual Report and Financials (if not included in annual report)
- Policy prohibiting workers from engaging in fraud, bribery, and corruption
- Date your organization was registered as a legal entity
- Program & Individual Activity Information
- Educational Needs Assessment (ENA)
- Program budget (please complete in your local currency)
- Authorized signer email address at official organization domain
- W8 Form (most recent form with current year signature)
- Proof of organization banking information (voided check or letter from bank)

Can you recommend speakers, faculty, or planners for an educational activity?

No. Our Company will not recommend speakers or be involved in the selection of speakers, faculty or planners. The provider must maintain full control over the planning of the activity, the development of content, and the selection of speakers, faculty and planners for the activity.

What is an Educational Needs Assessment (ENA)?

An ENA is the foundation for the education proposed and properly identifies the educational gap(s) to be addressed. The provider should be able to articulate the educational needs of the specific learners who will be participating in the proposed education. Consider the needs of learners as segmented by professional licensure or specialty, geographic region, and practice setting (e.g., urban vs. rural; academic vs. community). ENAs are typically grounded amongst a variety of sources, such as:

- Responses from learners to assessment questions from previous educational activities
 - Questions asked by learners to faculty during previous educational activities
 - Surveys of learners demonstrating challenges with application of principles to their respective practices
 - Quality metrics that set the performance standard, coupled with performance data from electronic health records or aggregated insurance claims
 - Published medical literature with a knowledge, competence, or performance improvement capability
 - Published disparities of care
 - Expert opinions
 - Patient perspectives
 - The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (<https://accme.org/accreditation-rules/accreditation-criteria/educational-needs>) and similar organizations provide guidance on how to conduct ENAs
- <https://accme.org/accreditation-rules/accreditation-criteria/educational-needs>

How are the learning objectives related to the Educational Needs Assessment (ENA)? How should the learning objectives be written?

Learning objectives should be written from the learner’s perspective. These statements should be directly derived from the ENA, be measurable and actionable to facilitate your measures of educational effectiveness. Bloom’s taxonomy provides several approaches to writing learning objectives depending on the anticipated outcome, whether it is a desired change in healthcare professional knowledge, attitudes, or behavior. There are numerous variations of the original publication of Bloom’s taxonomy.

What does Our Company look for with measures of educational effectiveness?

For educational activities, certified or not certified for credit, measures of educational effectiveness should align to close gaps identified in the educational needs assessment and should be reflective of the educational learning objectives. Therefore, if the educational gap for healthcare professionals is ‘knowledge’, measures of educational effectiveness should assess changes in knowledge. Whereas, if the educational gap is ‘attitude’, we would expect to see how you assessed the learners’ ability to shift their acceptance of an idea or evidence. In addition, if the educational gap is ‘performance’, we would expect to see how you assessed the learners’ ability to implement evidence-based medicine in a respective practice setting. There are numerous approaches to achieving this outcome, a few of which are illustrated in the CE Educator’s Toolkit <https://www.accme.org/ceeducatorstoolkit> from the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and the Society for Academic Continuing Medical Education.

While different learners may be at different stages in their adoption of knowledge, attitude, or behavior, it is often best to focus on where the majority of intended learners are in their practice. Educational reinforcements are often necessary for learners, regardless of their stage in the learning continuum. The education should be targeted to the needs of the specific learner cohort to close the respective knowledge, competence, or performance gap(s).

We expect the measures of educational effectiveness to measure changes in the identified educational need.

Technical issues, examples may include but are not limited to: My password is not working; the site is giving me an error; how can I print my application; how can I print the Letter of Agreement (LOA), etc.?

Contact the Independent Medical Education team in your Latin America Country for assistance

Resources

Does my budget need to be in local currency?

Yes

Will my approved grant application be subject to transparency reporting obligations with the Physician Payment Sunshine Act? What healthcare professionals (HCPs) are reportable for transfers of value when receiving Fellowships and/or Research Awards?

Yes, transparency is important to our company and all approved grants are subject to transfer of value reporting in accordance with the Physician Payment Sunshine Act.

Physician Payment Sunshine Act covered recipients that require reporting include the following HCPs: podiatrists, dentists and dental surgeons, optometrists, chiropractors, doctors of osteopathy, medical doctors, physician assistants, anesthesiologist assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses including - nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists and certified nurse midwives.

I need to make a change to the approved Independent Medical Education application, what is the process for submitting a change of scope?

Requestors must notify Our Company of any substantive changes to a grant proposal immediately upon knowledge of potential change and at least 30 days prior to the start date of the activity.

Substantive changes to a grant proposal that would require a Change of Scope (COS) notification to Our Company may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Activity start/end date
- Expiration date of enduring activities
- Venue/location of live activities
- Added or deleted activities
- Additional or less than planned funding
- Activity design, methodology, or program execution
- Credit hours
- Learner types and/or anticipated number of learners
- Identified educational partners
- Accreditation status
- Change in outcomes level

Our Company reserves the right to deny funding as a result of any substantive change to the originally approved grant proposal. If the COS request is not approved, requestor must promptly complete reconciliation and provide a refund of the grant funding provided.

If you have a grant application that is impacted by a COS, please contact us immediately.

How do I acknowledge commercial support?

For activities in the United States, you may acknowledge commercial support from Merck by stating: "This activity is supported through an independent educational grant from Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, NJ, USA." For activities outside of the United States, you may acknowledge commercial support from Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) by stating: "This activity is supported through an Independent Medical Education grant from Merck Sharp & Dohme LLC, Rahway, NJ, USA."

Are there any expenses where we may not use Independent Medical Education (IME) grant funding?

Our IME grants may not be used for items such as, but not limited to:

- Food, including meals, snacks, and beverages for learners
- Entertainment or recreational activities
- Gifts or gift cards for faculty, organizers, or learners
- Program/registration fees, travel or expenses for learners
- Capital, infrastructure or operating expenses such as office or computer equipment, software, furniture, or facilities modifications

Decision Process

How long does it take to review my application once submitted?

This is a competitive process, and your application will be assessed against other applications according to our grant review criteria in order to fund the highest quality applications. Thus, this question is dependent on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, the quality of the application, alignment to Our Company's scientific interests, funding requested, and funding available. Our Company funds only the best applications aligned with our scientific interests received at least 60 calendar days before the start of the proposed Independent Medical Education activity.

Why was my grant request declined?

Our company only funds the highest quality applications that align with our scientific interests. The evaluation of your application was done competitively, comparing it with other submissions based on our grant review criteria. We are unable to provide specific feedback related to the evaluation of individual applications, to ensure the independence of future requests from your organization.

Outcomes Submission

How do I submit my outcomes reports?

You will receive an automated email from the Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) Grant Portal <noreply@system.versaic.com> containing directions to upload an outcomes report shortly after the completion of an activity.

Reconciliation

How long do I have to complete the financial reconciliation?

You have 45 days from the end date of your grant to complete the financial reconciliation.

How do I return unused funds?

If you have unused funds, please contact us for further direction.