

BEME Review Process:

Stage 1 – Initial enquiry and topic registration

- Stage 1 of the process remains “in house”, dealt with by the BEME Administrator and the BREC Secretary.
- Information on the BEME web site will allow new review authors to check for potential duplication of similar reviews.
- The BEME web site will provide a downloadable topic registration form
- The registration form allows for extra important information from authors, which includes the reason why this topic is important/why the review needs to be written, the main research questions, how it will enhance educational practice and should there be any potential overlap with existing/developing Reviews- how their Review adds to what is already known/how it may translate into practice.
- The registration form, once received within the BEME office will be dealt with by the BEME Administrator and BREC Secretary.
- Support from the BREC Chair and member of BREC will be on hand if necessary.
- Once accepted by the central administration, new topic registrations will appear on the BEME web site.
- All potential new authors of BEME reviews will be informed (supported by information on the BEME web site) that at any stage of the review process, no guarantee is given that publication is ensured. The BREC has the authority to remove a Review from the process at any stage should it feel that it is either not progressing or is not going to achieve the necessary standard for publication.
- The process allows the BREC Chair and Secretary to ask for more information at this stage if necessary, and authors are given a time-line of **four weeks** to provide all information for a topic registration after they have sent in an inquiry.
- If the registration is accepted the Review progresses to the Protocol stage.

Stage 2 – Protocol development

- Once the Registration has been accepted, the authors are provided with a checklist, which will be used by the BICC and its reviewers in assessing the Protocol.

- The Protocol will allow for an expansive explanation of the proposed Review, specifically including a scoping search of the topic and, very importantly, how the review will advance the subject of healthcare education and translate into future practice.
- The authors – now to be referred to as the BEME Review Group (BRG) will be given **four months** to complete the Protocol and return it to the BEME office. The BEME office will send one reminder three months after the request for a Protocol. Only under exceptional situations will an extension be given. Protocols not returned within four months, and without reason, will be withdrawn from the BEME Review process; the BRG will be informed. If there is a good reason to extend the deadline a new extended deadline will be proposed.
- During this four-month period the BEME Administrator and BREC Secretary will arrange for a BICC to take the lead for taking the Review forward. Individual BICCs may have already declared an interest during the time of Protocol development; there may be a BICC who has specific interest in the topic area; other than that, allocation is through an allocation in-turn process.
- The BEME Administrator will keep a database of BICC's expertise, thus helping in searching for an appropriate BICC and trying to pair with a new Review.
- Once the Protocol is returned to the office it is then sent to the allocated BICC-leader for review and the BRG will be informed
- The responsible BICC is expected to provide its review within **four weeks** of receipt of the Protocol. The responsible BICC should use its internal team to review the Protocol and is expected to provide a copy of each of the reviewers comments, plus a consensus document that agrees to either:

Accept

Minor changes needed

Major changes needed

Reject

With specific explanations and advice for improvements.

- The responsible BICC will inform the BEME Administrator and the BREC Secretary of their decision. If the BICC needs any advice or guidance at this point, they will be supported by the BEME Central Administration and/or the BREC if required.
- For each Protocol review, and should there be any dispute, one member from the BREC will additionally review the Protocol and the BICC's advice and give his/her

advice, which will usually be in line with the BICC advice. The central administration will inform the BRG.

- If the Protocol requires revision, the BRG is given **one month** to provide the necessary changes and a letter in which they explain briefly how the comments of the reviewers were dealt with. In the case of major or substantial change being necessary, this timeframe can be adjusted accordingly.
- Revisions of a Protocol will be sent back to the BICC for re-review. The BICC will return their opinion within **four weeks**.
- The BREC Chair and BREC Secretary and, if required, one member of the BREC provide final acceptance of the Protocol, having taken into consideration the opinions and final conclusion of the BICC.
- The BREC Secretary will sign off the final Protocol. The BEME office will update the data file.
- A Protocol should be rejected if not regarded as matching the BEME standards.
- A checklist is used to review the protocol. The criteria are available on the website and will be sent to the BRG after topic registration.
- Once the Protocol is accepted, then the BRG is informed.
- It is made very clear to all concerned that an accepted Protocol does not ensure future publication.

Stage 3- Review Development

- The BRG will be informed that they will have **12 months** to complete their Review. Depending on the complexity of the review, this timeframe can be negotiated with the BEME office; the emphasis will be upon the BRG to justify any increase in time.
- The final review should be sent to the BEME office. The BEME office will send one reminder after 8 months.
- A short (one page A4) report is to be encouraged after 6 months Review development. This report is sent to the BICC and the central administration. The report will be placed on the BEME website
- The BICC is expected to review the completed final review.

- At an early stage of the review development, BICCs are encouraged to seek at least three reviewers; one should be an expert in the area of the review, either in the topic area or in the type of review and can be drawn from outside of the BICC. The responsible BICC will give an overall recommendation to reject, accept or request major or minor revision and inform the BEME Administrator and the BREC Secretary. This should be done within **four weeks** of receiving the Review.
- Should there be any unsatisfactory development or prolonged unnecessary delay occur, the BEME office will inform the BICC and BRG that the review will be removed from the system. This decision should be justified, informing the authors on the reasons for their failure.

Stage 4- BEME Review acceptance and Publication

- Final acceptance or rejection of the Review is based upon a favorable and agreed Review report from the responsible BICC, their external advisor(s), the BREC Chair, BREC Secretary and at least one member of the BREC.
- If the decision is to make changes to the Review, the BRG will be informed and the BRG will be given **six weeks** to make these changes. This time may be altered according to the degree of change necessary. The responsible BICC, the BREC Chair, BREC Secretary and one member of the BREC will check if the recommendations of the reviewers are dealt with to a sufficient level.
- All should note that a BEME Review is an academic paper, matching the high standards required for publication in substantive journals. If, after several iterations of change, the Review appears to not be able to match these standards, then a decision has to be made to reject the Review. This is a difficult decision and should be made in agreement with the BICC, the BREC Chair, BREC Secretary and the BREC.
- Due to space restrictions in Medical Teacher, BEME Reviews have a maximum total word count of 12000 words, which includes references, tables, figures etc. However, Medical Teacher accommodates a 'Supplementary Material' option for each paper, which allows authors to place important but not essential elements of the BEME Review there. This is a separate document that is linked from the online contents page of the journal and therefore is easily accessible for those wanting more information. Such material would probably be the long list of papers found on searching, the algorithm used in searching, etc. Supplementary material is not typeset by the publisher and is printed in the format in which it is submitted. Authors are asked to indicate clearly within their review paper, the tables and figures that are to be included as supplementary material.

