

News

Release: 9-25-2006

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Council Votes to Increase Amount of Education Required for Engineering Licensure

At the 2006 Annual Business Meeting of the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), delegates voted to modify the NCEES Model Law requirements for licensure to require additional education for engineering licensure.

The approved language states that an engineer intern with a bachelor's degree must have an additional 30 credits of acceptable upper-level undergraduate or graduate-level coursework from approved providers in order to be admitted to the Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) examination.

NCEES committees have been studying this issue for more than five years, first through the Engineering Licensure Qualifications Task Force (ELQTF) and then through the Licensure Qualifications Oversight Group (LQOG). ELQTF, which was made up of representatives from NCEES, engineering professional societies, government, industry, and education, was established in 2001 to evaluate the U.S. licensure system. The task force concluded in 2003 that additional education would be necessary in the future to prepare students for engineering practice at the professional level.

LQOG, which was made up of NCEES members only, was formed the next year to study the ELQTF report, assess the recommendations from NCEES and Member Board perspectives, and prepare recommendations for Council action. LQOG supported the ELQTF conclusion that additional engineering education was needed. Both groups cited the decrease in the number of credits required to earn an undergraduate degree—from 150 a few decades ago to an average of 128—as one of the reasons for supporting this change to the Model Law.

The Council approved the concept during the 2005 Annual Meeting when it voted to charge the Committee on Uniform Procedures and Legislative Guidelines (UPLG) with incorporating language requiring additional education into the Model Law. At this year's meeting, UPLG recommended specific language to be added to the Model Law for this requirement (see below). The effective date of this provision is January 1, 2015.

The Council also passed a UPLG motion adding language to the Model Rules stating that, effective January 1, 2015, a graduate with a bachelor of science degree in engineering requiring more than 120 credits may request that credits earned in excess of 120 credits be applied to satisfy the requirement.

Now that the Council has approved the concept and approved incorporating it into the Model Law, NCEES will define what the additional education should be. This coming year's UPLG Committee has been charged with defining some of the terms and considering issues related to implementation.

New Model Law language

The following language was added to the NCEES Model Law definition of what will be considered minimum evidence satisfactory to the board that an applicant is qualified for licensure as a professional engineer.

Licensure by Examination (Effective January 1, 2015) The following individuals shall be admitted to an 8-hour written examination in the principles and practice of engineering:

1. An engineer intern with a bachelor's degree, with an additional 30 credits of acceptable upper-level undergraduate or graduate-level coursework from approved course providers, and with a specific record of an additional 4 years or more of progressive experience on engineering projects of a grade and a character which indicate to the board that the applicant may be competent to practice engineering.
2. An engineer intern with a master's degree in engineering from an institution that offers EAC/ABET-accredited programs, or the equivalent, and with a specific record of an additional 3 years or more of progressive experience on engineering projects of a grade and a character which indicate to the board that the applicant may be competent to practice engineering.
3. An engineer intern with a doctorate in engineering acceptable to the board and with a specific record of an additional 2 years or more of progressive experience on engineering projects of a grade and a character which indicate to the board that the applicant may be competent to practice engineering.
4. An individual with a doctorate in engineering acceptable to the board and with a specific record of an additional 4 years or more of progressive experience on engineering projects of a grade and a character which indicate to the board that the applicant may be competent to practice engineering.

The NCEES Annual Meeting was held September 13–16 in Anchorage, Alaska. NCEES develops licensing examinations for the engineering and surveying professions. These examinations are used by engineering and surveying licensing boards across the United States as part of their candidate assessment process. NCEES also provides examination scoring and administration services to licensing boards, as well as a variety of other products and services to engineering and surveying professionals. NCEES headquarters is located in Clemson, S.C.