



## **NSPE Position Statement No. 1737—Licensure and Qualifications for Practice**

**ADOPTED: July 1999**

**LATEST REVISION: July 2010**

**NSPE CONTACT: Licensure and Qualifications for Practice Committee**

The licensing or registration of engineers in the United States and its jurisdictions has been a key goal of NSPE since its founding in 1934. This position statement is made to expand and detail NSPE's Professional Policy No. 152, Licensure and Qualifications for Practice.

### **Engineering Licensure**

"Licensure as a professional engineer" is the statutory process through which a person meets the legal requirements sufficient to be permitted by law to practice engineering in that jurisdiction. Licensing and registration are the terms used, often interchangeably, in the state statutes to establish these requirements.

State licensure laws for design professionals are predicated upon and justified only as a means to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. The public interest is best served by the licensure of all qualified individuals within the engineering profession.

### **Licensure Law**

NSPE endorses enactment of uniform licensure laws in all jurisdictions. The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) has developed Model Laws as guides for use by engineering licensure (registration) boards and legislatures in the interest of achieving uniform laws for the licensure of engineers in all jurisdictions. NSPE endorses the NCEES Model Law definitions of the "practice of engineering" and the "practice of land surveying" and encourages enactment of Model Law provisions. NSPE endorses and supports the concept of licensure of engineers only as a "professional engineer" and opposes licensure status by designated branches or specialties.

### **Qualifications**

NSPE encourages the adoption of the following provisions in all jurisdictions:

- a. Establish the bachelor's degree in engineering from a program accredited by the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology/Engineering Accreditation Commission (ABET/EAC) or one assessed by ABET/EAC as substantially comparable, as the base educational requirement for licensure. NSPE supports the establishment of additional academic requirements beyond the bachelor's degree, such as a master's degree or equivalent, as a prerequisite for licensure and practice of engineering at the professional level as outlined in NSPE Professional Policy No. 168.
- b. Pass the Fundamentals of Engineering and Principles and Practice examinations as prepared and administered by NCEES. NSPE encourages all eligible students to take and pass the NCEES Fundamentals of Engineering examination prior to graduation.
- c. Obtain at least four years of professional experience after the degree described above, with experience credit allowed for graduate study of engineering or teaching of advanced engineering subjects in an ABET/EAC-accredited engineering curriculum.
- d. Permit a nonlicensed individual who holds both an ABET/EAC-accredited undergraduate degree or its equivalent and a Ph.D. from an engineering program that is ABET/EAC accredited at the undergraduate level to be excused from taking the Fundamentals of Engineering examination.
- e. Engineering faculty who hold an ABET/EAC accredited undergraduate degree, or hold a Ph.D. in engineering from an institution that offers an ABET/EAC accredited

undergraduate degree, should be excused from taking the Fundamentals of Engineering exam.

#### Enforcement

NSPE and its state societies should take an active role in assisting state licensure (registration) boards in the enforcement and disciplinary provisions assigned by statute.

#### Certification Programs

Following licensure as a professional engineer, individuals may voluntarily have their expertise in a specified field of engineering recognized through an appropriate specialty certification program. Such certification must not imply that other licensed professional engineers are less qualified for practice in a particular field of specialty. Professional engineering licensure is the only qualification for engineering practice. NSPE and its state societies will actively oppose attempts to enact any local, state, or federal legislation or rule that would mandate certification in lieu of or beyond licensure as a legal requirement for the performance of engineering services.

#### Professional Engineer Intern

To more adequately reflect the educational achievement of candidates for licensure and their progression toward professional engineer status, NSPE supports the use of the title engineer intern (EI), formerly engineer in training (EIT), and will exercise its influence to secure appropriate changes in the statutes and literature of the profession to include the new title.