January 10, 2017

Dr. Patricia Brackin  
Chair, Criteria Committee  
Engineering Accreditation Commission  
ABET  
415 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Patricia,

The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the ABET EAC General Criteria 3 (Student Outcomes) and General Criteria 5 (Curriculum). NSPE commends the Criteria Committee for its work on this critical initiative. We believe that important progress is being made and encourage continued collaboration. After careful review, NSPE submits the following comments for the Criteria Committee to closely consider for incorporation into the version presented at the July 2017 governance meeting.

1) NSPE again requests that the definition of the word “team” in Criterion 3.7 be expanded by including the word “multidisciplinary” as a descriptor. NSPE understands that there have been concerns raised about the interpretation of this term. Although the interpretation may vary from program to program, it is very important for the experience required by Criterion 3.7 to reflect teams that cross the boundaries between sub-disciplines, disciplines, or even professions. Having teams that “include individuals of diverse backgrounds, skills or perspectives consistent with ABET’s policies and positions on diversity and inclusion” (from the “Team” definition) or that are “collaborative and inclusive” (from Criterion 3.7) does not ensure that the needed experience of multidisciplinary individuals working as part of a team is addressed. If such a change is made, it should be acceptable to allow programs to determine how they interpret and include the multidisciplinary aspect, even if it varies between programs.

2) NSPE strongly requests that an explicit reference to the value of engineering licensure be included in the general criteria. While we understand that not all areas of each engineering discipline’s practice are subject to licensure, engineering licensure is critical to protecting the public health, safety and welfare and is a vital part of the engineering profession. Every state requires licensure for certain aspects of the practice of engineering. A critical component of the engineering curriculum should be ensuring that engineering students are aware of the potential that their practice may require a license. While all states regulate engineering practice and licensure, it is the position of NSPE that all engineering graduates should, at the very least, be required to know of and understand the role licensure...
plays in the practice of engineering and that each state sets forth the requirements and exemptions for licensure.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this comment and we hope the committee will incorporate the proposed changes into its revised version. Please contact Arielle Eiser, NSPE Senior Manager of Government Relations, at aeiser@nspe.org with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Kodi Jean Verhalen, P.E., F.NSPE
President
National Society of Professional Engineers