

NSPE Position Statement No. 09-1766—Engineering Faculty Licensure

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NSPE Contact: Committee on Policy and Advocacy

Professional Policy Supported: 09-Licensure

It is the position of the National Society of Professional Engineers that licensing jurisdictions should be encouraged to incorporate in their statutes the NCEES Model Law definition of the practice of engineering which requires engineering faculty who teach advanced engineering subjects to be licensed professional engineers in the jurisdiction where they are practicing. “Advanced engineering subjects” as referenced in the Model Law are typically interpreted to mean upper-level undergraduate or graduate-level engineering courses with a component of design.

Basis

The National Society of Professional Engineers advocates requiring professional engineers to practice within their area of technical competence for the continued betterment of society. Such practice is subject to disciplinary control by and through the state boards of engineering licensure.

NSPE recognizes the responsibility of engineering faculty to formulate curricula and to teach students to prepare them for the professional practice of engineering. To fulfill this responsibility as it relates to the public health, safety, and welfare, engineering faculty teaching advanced engineering subjects should be licensed professional engineers. It is expected that faculty who are not licensed will practice under the responsible charge of a colleague who is licensed until such time as they have met the licensing requirements and become licensed. An engineering educator who heads an engineering department or division, or who is dean of an engineering college or school, is considered to be in responsible charge of the program and faculty and should be a licensed professional engineer at the time of appointment.

NSPE encourages licensing jurisdictions to phase in these requirements over an appropriate transition period.

This practice should be mandatory in engineering school administration and a part of the criteria used in the accreditation of engineering programs as administered by the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET Inc.

Academic institutions offering engineering programs are encouraged to properly identify licensed professional engineering faculty members as “P.E.” in the school catalog and other publications where names of faculty appear.