NSPE Position Statement No. 10-0177—Use of Certification Credentials

Adopted: May 2016
Latest Revision: March 2024
Sunset Date: March 2026
NSPE Contact: Committee on Policy and Advocacy
Professional Policy Supported: 10-Professional Practice

Position Statement: It is the position of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) that the importance of engineering licensure should not be supplanted, minimized, or diluted by the use of certification titles issued by certification programs, although such certifications may supplement the growth and practice of license-track individuals and licensees.

Background: Certification programs are not a substitute for engineering licensure. Certification programs are not currently construed to supply the level of personal and professional accountability provided by the professional engineering licensure process required and administered under state or territorial law. Certifications, when independent of licensure, may have the effect of confusing the public’s understanding of the role of licensed professional engineers and blur the distinction between the practice of engineering by licensed professionals and other services. When such certification programs employ engineering titles in their certifications further misunderstanding may occur.

1. NSPE advocates licensure is the only requirement to practice professional engineering.

2. To avoid confusing the public’s understanding of certifications with licensure and the role of licensed professional engineers, licensed professional engineers are encouraged to employ the PE designation as their primary credential designation, before the use of other professional, academic or certification designations.