

## Eligibility for PE License in North Carolina<sup>1</sup>

The following is a summary of the education and experience requirements to obtain a Professional Engineer (PE) license in North Carolina. The exams include the Fundamental of Engineering (FE) Exam and Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) Exam described in the North Carolina Administrative Code and applied by the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors. Both exams are computer-based, available year-round at Pearson VUE test centers, and administered by the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES).

### **There are two common methods<sup>2</sup> (only 1 must be met) to be eligible to sit for the PE exam:**

1. Pass the FE exam (as administered by the NCEES<sup>3</sup>) and graduate with 4-year EAC/ABET<sup>4</sup> accredited program engineering degree (or related science degree<sup>5</sup>) or master's degree in engineering from an institution that offers EAC/ABET accredited programs in the same discipline
2. Receive a waiver for the FE exam by providing evidence of 20 years of progressive engineering experience to NCBELS<sup>6</sup>

### **There are two requirements (both must be met) to apply for the PE license with NCBELS:**

1. Pass the PE exam (as administered by the NCEES)
2. Gain the required engineering experience<sup>7</sup>, which is a minimum of<sup>8</sup>:
  - a. 4 years for applicants with a 4-year, master's, or doctoral EAC/ABET engineering degree
  - b. 8 years for applicants with a 4-year EAC/ABET engineering technology degree or a 4-year Non-EAC/ABET engineering or science degree<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Primary information sources: <https://www.ncbels.org/applications/professional-engineers/>, <https://www.ncbels.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/PEApplicationProcess.pdf>, and Title 21, Chapter 56 of <http://reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac.asp> (in particular, 21 NCAC 56 .0501 & 21 NCAC 56 .0503)

<sup>2</sup> The other two, less-common methods are: 1) employed as a full-time engineering faculty member or 2) possess an earned doctoral degree in engineering

<sup>3</sup> <https://ncees.org/engineering/fe/>; Engineering Intern (EI) in NC (after passing FE exam and graduating):

<https://www.ncbels.org/application/engineer-intern-certification/>

<sup>4</sup> Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)

<sup>5</sup> Per 21 NCAC 56 .0501 (2): "*Engineering or related science curriculum of four or more years other than ones approved by the Board*" is defined as a curriculum, although not accredited by ABET, of technical courses that contains engineering or scientific principles.

Degrees are evaluated by the Board on a case by case basis. In general, acceptable degrees typically include any engineering, biology, chemistry, earth science, math, physics, construction management, computer science, or similar degrees. Common degrees that are not accepted include business, finance, accounting, criminal justice, English, history, and similar degrees.

<sup>6</sup> An individual with a specific record of 20 years or more of progressive experience on engineering projects of a grade and character which indicates adequate engineering ability to the Board, may be approved for waiver of Exam I by the Board. Those qualified applicants desiring waiver of Exam I should make a written request for the waiver by letter, and submit the request with the completed application. <https://www.ncbels.org/application/20-year-fe-waiver/>

<sup>7</sup> Not less than one-half of the required engineering experience shall be of a professional grade and character, and performed under the responsible charge of a licensed Professional Engineer. The term "progressive engineering experience" means that, during the period of time in which an applicant has made a practical utilization of acquired knowledge, continuous improvement, growth and development in the utilization of that knowledge have been shown, as revealed in the complexity and technical detail of the work product or work record. The applicant must show that greater individual responsibility for the work product has been continuously assumed over that period of time. Experience prior to graduation is not considered in the calculation of progressive engineering experience. ABET accredited engineering cooperative experience may be considered with a maximum allowable credit of 1 year.

<sup>8</sup> Per 21 NCAC 56 .0501(3)(A): Credit for experience (years of experience in application cannot exceed calendar years) - 1 year for EAC/ABET master's degree, 2 years for EAC/ABET doctoral degree, progressive land surveying (up to 2 years), teaching engineering at university level, engineering co-op (up to 1 year, must be shown on transcript)

For questions or updates, please contact Daniel Findley (Daniel\_Findley@ncsu.edu) - Updated Aug. 29, 2024

INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY: This information is intended for informational purposes only. Some of the information may be dated and may not reflect the most current requirements and all possible scenarios. Refer to NCEES and NCBELS for official requirements and processes.