

## PE Nuclear exam completes move to computer-based testing

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF ENGINEERING (PE) Nuclear exam will officially complete its transition to computer-based testing in October 2018. Examinees will take the first computer-based PE Nuclear exam at Pearson VUE testing centers across the United States on October 19.

This is the fifth NCEES exam to complete the move to computer-based format, including the Fundamentals of Engineering, Fundamentals of Surveying, Principles and Practice of Surveying, and PE Chemical exams.

Unlike other CBT exams transitioned to date, in which examinees can schedule their exam on any available day throughout the year, this exam is a single-day testing event. This schedule is necessary because the PE Nuclear exam has a smaller examinee population.

### Exam format, specifications

The PE Nuclear exam uses a linear fixed format, which means that all examinees receive the same exam.

While this format is similar to the previous pencil-and-paper exam, the computer-based PE Nuclear exam includes a new testing component: alternative item types. AITs are items other than traditional multiple-choice questions with one correct answer. They could include the following:

- Multiple select (require examinees to select multiple answers)
- Point and click (require examinees to click on part of a graphic to answer)
- Drag and drop (require examinees to click on and drag items to match, sort, rank, or label)
- Fill in the blank (provide a space for examinees to enter a response to a question)

“CBT allows us to introduce alternative item types and ask questions differently if the AIT adds value,” explained NCEES Director of Exam Services Tim Miller, P.E. “We introduced AITs for the PS exam when it moved to CBT in 2016. Since then, we have expanded AITs to our other CBT exams.”

The computer-based PE Nuclear exam contains 85 questions. The total appointment time is 9.5 hours. The actual exam lasts 8.5 hours; the other hour allows time for administrative tasks, including a tutorial and optional 50-minute break. New specifications are posted for the PE Nuclear exam, but the actual exam topics have not changed since they were published in October 2012. NCEES changed the order of the topics and added the number of questions for each topic area. The exam specifications are posted online at [ncees.org/exams/PE](https://ncees.org/exams/PE).

The computer-based PE Nuclear is now a closed-book exam. A searchable electronic *PE Nuclear Reference Handbook* is displayed on the monitor during the exam, but no other reference material is allowed. Examinees can purchase a practice exam for the computer-based PE Nuclear exam and download a free PDF of the handbook to use when preparing for the exam.

### CBT transition for other PE exams

NCEES is continuing to work toward moving the rest of its pencil-and-paper exams to CBT. The PE exams, which cover 24 engineering disciplines, are each following their own transition timetable.

For the latest information on CBT exams, visit [ncees.org/CBT](https://ncees.org/CBT).