

License to Engineer

One year ago, I got up at 4:30 in the morning and drove over an hour for the privilege of taking an 8-hour exam on nuclear engineering. Yes, I said privilege.

The exam was the Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) Exam, and passing it was the last step to get licensed as a Professional Engineer. I had wanted the P.E. license since I decided to enter engineering. Why?

Being licensed means that an independent authority has verified that you are qualified to perform work that affects public safety. Being licensed means you can work in states and on jobs that require a license without having to be supervised by someone who's got one. Being licensed sets you apart, strengthens your credentials, and opens doors. In fact, in many areas of the nuclear industry, a P.E. carries more weight than a Ph.D. (Being licensed also means getting extra letters after your name, a fancy stamp, and often a pay raise.)

But the Nuclear PE Exam is in trouble. Applications have been dropping, and the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), which manages the testing, has placed the nuclear PE exam on probation. If applications don't rise, they may cancel the exams entirely – and no one will be able to become a “P.E. (Nuclear)” anymore.

Here's how you can do it:

Graduate. Any ABET-accredited engineering program will do.

Take the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam. This exam is offered twice a year, often on campuses. Since it covers the basics of an undergraduate engineering education, most people take it just before or after graduation while the material is still fresh - but if you missed it then, you can still register.

Work. Requirements vary by state, but generally you will need about four years of work experience in nuclear engineering. Note that some states require experience to be gained either on or with a licensed P.E. - ask the company you work for if they can provide this.

Take the PE Exam. The nuclear exam is offered each October. An application is required; this application certifies that you have completed the previous three steps and includes letters of reference from colleagues or supervisors. Workshops and study guides for the exam are available from ANS (which also writes the exam questions).

For more information, visit <http://www.ncees.org/> – or feel free to send me email.

Darby Kimball, P.E. (Nuclear)
dskimbal@bechtel.com

Changes to YMG Bylaws and Rules

The new YMG Bylaws & Rules have been accepted with 10 votes from the Executive Committee, all in favor, which easily exceeded the quorum of votes and simple majority required to approve the changes. The Bylaws and Rules have been amended

to: (1) allow student members to hold officer positions, (2) change the length of term for officers from two years to either one or two years, and (3) clarify the process for dissolution of a division. Due to the change, student members in good standing

in the Society may now hold the office of Secretary or Treasurer, and serve on the Executive Committee in the Technical Group.

Call for Volunteers...

Thinking about getting more involved? No better way to start than pitching in on the following committees and activities for YMG.....

- Fun Run in Albuquerque – Attending the Winter Meeting? Help out with the YMG sponsored fun run! (Dave Pointer, dpointer@anl.gov)
- Website – Create the “new face” of YMG. (Kent Welter, kbw@nrc.gov)
- Awards Committee – Establish YMG sponsored awards and nominees. (Darby Kimball, dskimbal@bechtel.com)
- Membership Committee – Lead the charge in attracting and keeping ANS young professional membership. (Meghan Goldman, Meghan.Goldman@nuclear.energy.gov)
- Finance Committee – Help establish our operating budget. (Brad Rearden, reardenb@ornl.gov)
- Newsletter/Publications Committee - Help compile and check the newsletter and other YMG publications. (George Tsakanikas, gatsakan@bechtel.com)

If interested, please contact the committee or activity lead directly.