

**BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND GEOLOGISTS**

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**Work Experience Engagement/Reference Instructions for Professional Engineer (PE) Applicants  
(Excluding: Traffic, Geotechnical, and Structural)**

Professional Engineer (PE) applicants (Excluding: Traffic, Geotechnical, and Structural) use the Online [BPELSG Connect](#) Portal to submit their application to the Board. During the application process, the applicant will complete Part A of the Work Experience Engagement/Reference within BPELSG Connect, under the Experience Tab. Please note that for each Work Experience Engagement/Reference submitted by the applicant, contact information for the professional reference will be required. After the applicant submits their application in BPELSG Connect, each of the applicant's professional references will be emailed a copy of Part A of the Work Experience Engagement/Reference with a link that will instruct them to complete Part B. Part B must be personally completed by the professional reference, not the applicant. On Part B, the professional reference will be asked to confirm their relationship with the applicant, professional supervision, and confirm the claimed experience within the engagement/reference. Applicants will be able to login to their [BPELSG Connect](#) profile to verify if their professional references have completed the reference, but applicants will not be able to see the professional references response. Applicants are responsible for contacting each of their references to encourage them to complete the references in a timely manner. The application will not be reviewed by Board staff until all completed references have been received by the Board via BPELSG Connect. Review the following to ensure that all reference requirements are met:

- Applicants must obtain a minimum of four (4) references in accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 427.10(b)(1).
- A professional reference cannot be related to the applicant by birth or marriage in accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 427.10(b)(1). If the applicant is in a situation which necessitates the use of a relative to verify qualifying experience (i.e., family business), in addition to the reference supplied by the relative, the applicant must submit an additional qualifying reference from an individual who is not a relative in order to verify the applicant's employment. The four (4) references, from non-relatives, must be qualified professional references.
- Qualifying experience includes only engineering work in the branch for which the applicant is applying for licensure. It does not overlap with credit claimed for education. It does not include overtime, training, orientation, non-engineering work, or student summer work. Qualifying experience may be less than the total number of months worked. It is computed by Total Months Worked less Non-Qualifying Experience. Qualifying experience means engineering employment that requires the applicant to use sound judgement in making engineering decisions and contributes to progress towards becoming a Professional Engineer.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to select professional references that are technically qualified to appraise their skills as an engineer and verify their qualifying work experience. It is also the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate their qualifications to the individual who will be completing the reference. A reference must be able to indicate that their evaluation of the applicant is based upon personal knowledge, either gained by direct association in the work environment or by a review of sufficient and diverse work samples and an interview of the applicant.
- The Board considers references from the individuals below in the following descending order of preference. In the case of an applicant whose experience appears to be marginal, or where there is

a conflict between reference evaluations of the applicant, more weight will be given to reference sources who were in the best position to have personal knowledge of the applicant's qualifying experience (i.e., immediate supervisor, etc.):

1. Immediate supervisors/individuals in responsible charge of the work;
2. Indirect supervisors;
3. Co-workers at an equal or higher level;
4. Co-workers not closely associated with the applicant; and,
5. Clients/other qualified persons.

- Comity applicants (applicants licensed out of state) may submit NCEES Records in lieu of Work Experience Engagements/References, but NCEES Records are not required for comity applicants. In the case that the NCEES Record does not provide sufficient information the Board needs to determine if an applicant meets the requirements for licensure in California, the applicant will be asked to provide additional information.

- **Civil Engineer Applicants:**

Civil engineer applicants are required to provide references from licensed civil engineers or from individuals who are legally authorized to practice civil engineering. Except for applicants with qualifying experience gained while in federal employment, all civil engineer applicants claiming California work experience must provide references from persons who are licensed as civil engineers in California. If an applicant is claiming experience that has occurred in another state, and where the applicant's experience did not fall under any of the exemptions existing in that state, the references must be completed by a civil engineer authorized to practice in the state where the experience occurred.

If a civil engineer applicant has qualifying work experience outside of the United States, the references for that experience must be from persons authorized to practice civil engineering in accordance with the laws of the country in which the experience took place. If such references are not licensed engineers, they must provide information which indicates by what authority they are, or were, authorized to practice civil engineering in that country.

For civil engineering work experience which was gained in California or any other place where such work is required to be under the jurisdiction of a licensed civil engineer, at least one of the applicants' licensed references must be from someone who is or was in responsible charge of the work done by the applicant. A reference not verified by a licensed civil engineer in responsible charge will be considered as either non-civil engineering experience or illegal civil engineering experience, and in either case, it will not be acceptable. References must be persons who are technically qualified to appraise the applicant's skills as an engineer.

Unlicensed persons or persons not licensed as a civil engineer, who are completing references for federal employees, should indicate their educational background or other information to signify their engineering qualifications.

- **Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Applicants:**

Electrical and mechanical engineer applicants who have worked in situations where they were not exempt from all licensing requirements, and for experience which has occurred in California, the reference must be completed by licensed engineers authorized to practice in the branch in which the applicant is applying.

In California, electrical and mechanical engineering work performed by employees of the federal government and employees of manufacturing, mining, public utility, research and development, or other industrial corporations, is exempt. Such employees may serve as references whether or not they are licensed as long as they are qualified to appraise the technical competency of the

applicant. Examples of exempt employers are aerospace companies, such as Boeing or McDonnell Douglas; public utilities, such as San Diego Gas & Electric or PG&E; manufacturers of electrical or mechanical equipment such as Allen Bradley, Square D, Trane, or Carrier, etc. Examples of non-exempt employers include consulting electrical or mechanical engineering firms and state and local governments.

Since licensed civil engineers are authorized to practice electrical and mechanical engineering in connection with or supplementary to their civil engineering work, civil engineers may serve as references for electrical and mechanical engineer applicants.

Applicants claiming experience in another country should use reference persons who are licensed or legal authorized to practice in the country where the experience occurred.

If the applicant has worked in a non-exempt situation, and if the applicant does not know or has not worked with sufficient licensed engineers in their field to be able to procure the minimum number of appropriately licensed references, the applicant can solicit any appropriately licensed engineer to review their work samples (drawings, calculations, reports, etc.). Based on that review and a discussion with the applicant, such an engineer can then serve as a reference. The foregoing procedure is only permissible for supplementary references, and it is based on the assumption that the applicant's primary reference is a licensed engineer in responsible charge of the applicant's work. If all else fails, the applicant should contact the Board for instructions on how to obtain licensed references. In no case, however, will references from unlicensed persons or references not licensed in the applicant's branch of engineering be accepted in lieu of references from appropriately licensed engineers, when the requirement for having licensed references applies (i.e., when the applicant has been working in a non-exempt area). Persons working in California in industry or otherwise covered by the exemptions need not submit references from licensed engineers but must submit sufficient references to cover the required period of experience. The determination as to whether or not the employment is exempt is based on whether or not the employer is a corporation and usually, but not always, whether or not the primary business activity of the corporation is the making of a product. Unlicensed persons or persons not licensed in the applicant's branch of engineering who are completing a reference should indicate their educational background or other information to signify their engineering qualifications.

- **Applicants applying in other branches of Professional Engineering (Agricultural, Chemical, Control Systems, Fire Protection, Metallurgical, Nuclear, or Petroleum Engineer):**

Since the engineering branches listed above are not practice regulated, anyone is authorized to practice in these branches, and thus anyone can serve as a reference; however, the references should be from engineers, scientists, or technical persons that have enough knowledge of the applicant's engineering specialty to be able to make knowledgeable comments about the performance of the applicant's engineering work.

If an applicant is claiming experience that has occurred in another state, and where the applicant's experience did not fall under any of the exemptions existing in that state, the references must be completed by a Professional Engineer authorized to practice in the state where the experience occurred. Applicants claiming to have worked under an exemption in another state are required to indicate and provide the basis for that exemption.

Applicants claiming experience in another country should use reference persons who are licensed or legal authorized to practice in the country where the experience occurred.