

NEWS RELEASE

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FE, FS exams to begin gradual move to computer-based format

The state licensing boards that compose NCEES, the organization that develops and administers the exams used for engineering and surveying licensure throughout the United States, have voted to begin converting the FE and FS exams to a computer-based format.

The decision was made during last week's NCEES Annual Meeting in Denver. It followed a prolonged study by a special task force convened to consider the issue and share its findings with the organization.

The transition toward computer-based exam delivery will not take place overnight, said NCEES Executive Director Jerry Carter.

“The language approved by the Council includes the phrase ‘at the earliest feasible date,’ which means that NCEES exam writers and staff will be involved in a process that includes adapting exam item banks, selecting vendors, and communicating with licensing boards and examinees before we can begin offering the exams via computer,” said Carter.

“We anticipate it will be at least two years before FE and FS candidates begin taking the exams at computer-testing centers.”

Among the reasons given by the NCEES Computer-Based Testing Task Force for its recommendation to convert the exams to a computer-based format include greater scheduling flexibility for candidates, more uniformity in testing conditions, and enhanced security for exam content. The vote to move toward computer-based testing for the FE and FS exams was unanimous.

The FE exam is designed for college engineering seniors who intend to pursue a P.E. license. Nearly 50,000 examinees took the FE exam during the 2009–10 academic year, which included October and April administrations. The FS exam is a similar exam designed for those beginning the process toward professional surveying licensure.

The PE and PS exams, which engineering and surveying candidates are also required to take after completing work experience requirements, will continue to be paper-and-pencil exams for the foreseeable future.

Full details on this vote and other actions taken at the NCEES Annual Meeting will be available in the published minutes, which will be available this fall.



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ABOUT NCEES

NCEES is a national nonprofit organization composed of engineering and surveying licensing boards representing all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. An accredited standards developer with the American National Standards Institute, NCEES develops, scores, and administers the examinations used for engineering and surveying licensure throughout the United States. NCEES also provides services facilitating professional mobility for licensed engineers and surveyors. Its headquarters is located in Clemson, S.C.