



# ENGINEERING LICENSURE GUIDE

## FOR FOREIGN-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS IN MAINE

*New Mainers Resource Center, Portland Adult Education*



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## FOR FOREIGN-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS IN MAINE

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### **New Mainers Resource Center – Who We Are**

The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) is a program within Portland Adult Education serving area immigrants and refugees. Our offerings are designed to help New Mainers overcome barriers in order to enter the US workforce. These include: career guidance and employment case management, assistance with credential review and licensing requirements, intensive classes focused on job readiness skills, networking groups, workshops and other offerings.

### **The Purpose of this Guide**

One major challenge faced by skilled professionals, such as engineers, is to successfully navigate complex certification requirements if they want to practice as Professional Engineers (PEs) in Maine. The purpose of this guide is to provide foreign-trained engineers with the information they need to make informed decisions about engineering job opportunities and pursuing licensure.

### **For additional information or assistance from the New Mainers Resource Center contact:**

New Mainers Resource Center, *Maine's Welcome Back Center*, Portland Adult Education 14 Locust St. Portland, Maine 04101 Phone: 207 874-8155, Website: [www.nmrcmaine.org](http://www.nmrcmaine.org), Email: Sally Sutton, Program Coordinator, [suttos@portlandschools.org](mailto:suttos@portlandschools.org).

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*FOR FOREIGN-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS IN MAINE*

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# OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

If you wish to become a licensed Professional Engineer (PE), and you have trained and worked as an engineer in another country, see below for the process to become licensed in Maine.

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## DECIDE:

There are many ways to work as an engineer without being a PE (Professional Engineer). [See page 2-3 to review more information](#) on engineering jobs to consider, either as your career or while you pursue licensure. Review the steps below to understand what is required for PE licensure.

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## EDUCATION EVALUATION

1. Since there is an educational requirement to becoming a PE, you will need to have your official higher-level transcripts evaluated by NCEES (National Council of Examiners of Engineers and Surveyors) to determine substantial equivalence to the educational requirements set forth by NCEES.
2. Your educational transcripts will need to show that you have the equivalent of a 4-year Bachelor of Science degree from a science program that is substantially equivalent to the NCEES Education Standards.
3. The NCEES evaluation and licensing process is complicated, expensive and lengthy. As part of your job search, you should consider having an evaluation of your degree done by another NACES accredited evaluator: <http://www.naces.org/members.html>. Many employers will want to see that you have the equivalent of a U.S. engineering degree as part of your job application before they hire you.
  - [See page 4 for more information.](#)

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## TAKE THE FE EXAM

In order to take the PE exam, all engineers must first study for and pass the FE (Fundamentals of Engineering) exam. Additionally, there are some benefits to passing the FE even if you do not want to become a PE. There are no pre-requisites to take this exam. Once you have passed this exam and have successfully completed the education evaluation, you can apply to be an [Engineer Intern \(EI\)](#), which could help you in your job search.

- [See page 5 for more details.](#)

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## WORK EXPERIENCE:

You will need to complete the required years of engineering experience under a licensed PE. Your employer will need to submit a completed *Engineering Employment Verification Form* directly to the board office. You will also need five references to complete the *PE Reference Form*, three of whom must be licensed PEs.

- [See page 6 for more details.](#)

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## APPLY:

Once you have completed the education evaluation, passed the FE exam and completed the work experience requirement, you are ready to submit an application to the Maine Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers (<https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/licensure/licensure.html>). The board will then determine if you are ready to take the PE exam.

- [See page 7 for directions for applying.](#)

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## PASSING THE PE EXAM

The board will review your evaluation, FE exam, work requirement forms and references and determine if you are ready to take the test. You will then need to study for take the PE test in your engineering area. Once you have notified the board of your passing scores, you will receive state PE licensure.

- [See page 8 for more details on passing the exam.](#)

# 1

# DO I NEED A LICENSE?

## OVERVIEW

If you are a foreign-trained engineer, the process of becoming a professional engineer (PE) in the U.S. is very similar to the process for U.S.-educated engineers. You must complete two exams, and complete a certain amount of work experience (usually four years, possibly eight) before being given licensure. The only difference is in whether or not your undergraduate engineering education is or is not equivalent to the educational standards set forth by NCEES (National Council of Examiners of Engineers and Surveyors). Additionally, you may be able to receive credit for work you have already done in another country, possibly by-passing the work experience requirement. There are benefits to becoming a PE, and due to increasing regulations, there is more of a demand for them. There is a 9,000 to 30,000 dollar pay differential between those with PE licensure and those without. However, it is important to remember that many engineers are working in the U.S. in the engineering field without any licensure. There are many work options to pursue instead of, or while you work on attaining licensure. Review the following page to learn more about jobs available to those without licensure. Your ability to be successful in these positions will depend on your English competency, verbal and written communication skills, and knowledge of English terminology specific to your field.

## PE (PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER):

Only a licensed engineer may prepare, sign, seal, and submit engineering plans and drawings to a public authority for approval, or to seal engineering work for public and private clients. With these responsibilities comes more authority and greater earning potential. If you want to pursue a career as a consulting engineer, own your own firm or be in charge of engineering work for the public, licensure is a legal requirement. Many federal, state, and municipal agencies now require that higher-level engineering positions be filled only by licensed PEs. And for those considering a career in teaching, many states are increasingly requiring that engineering teachers be licensed.

## WORKING WITHOUT LICENSURE:

There are many opportunities to work as an engineer without a license. In fact, there are a relatively small amount of PEs, and many engineers will work for and assist a PE in technical, advisory and management roles. If you are searching for work while you pursue licensure, target jobs that do not require you to perform any of the tasks relegated to PEs. Be upfront about your plans to become a PE when you are being hired, as many companies will support you in the process. If you do plan to become licensed at some point, make sure you take a job where you will work under a licensed PE, so that they can verify your work experience when you are ready to apply.

## ENGINEER-INTERN (EI) OR ENGINEER IN TRAINING (EIT)

After you pass the FE exam, and your education has passed NCEES standards, you can apply for an Engineer-Intern (EI) Certification from the State of Maine. See more information about EI here: [https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/licensure/intern\\_cert.html](https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/licensure/intern_cert.html). Being an EI (or EIT in other states) assures potential employers that you have met basic standards in education and engineering knowledge. Here are the directions for applying:

1. Submit your transcript evaluation that shows that your education is substantially equivalent to the NCEES Education Standards.
2. Pass the NCEES Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Exam and submit scores.
3. Complete and sign the application and send to the Maine State Board of Engineering. Application can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/documents/2014%20EI%20APP.pdf>

## YOUR FIRST U.S. ENGINEERING JOB SEARCH:

There are many different jobs available for bachelor-level engineers. There are private firms in each engineering discipline who often need Engineers with a BS in engineering, even for those who have not taken the FE exam. There are public companies (such as the department of transportation or public works) that will have consistent need for technicians and engineers at all levels. Taking an entry level job at these different places will have many benefits. Having passed your FE and being a licensed intern will set you apart and give you some helpful credibility. Look for any engineering job through this website: <https://www.engineerjobs.com/>, and **SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SOME SAMPLE ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS, OR FIRST TIME ENGINEERING JOBS IN THE U.S.:**

## CHEMICAL ENGINEERS

Individuals looking to enter the field of chemical engineering could consider a variety of entry-level or intern positions in labs or public / private firms working on chemical engineering projects. Entry-level positions often require that candidates complete or plan to complete a Bachelor of Science in engineering. Foreign-trained engineers with a BS and work experience will be very competitive for these positions. Entry-level positions in this field may do lab assisting, assist with research, follow through on safety procedures, conduct performance tests etc. Sample jobs and requirements:

- *Lab technician: May require an associate or bachelors in applied science (Associates degree in applied science or related field required. May require some experience. Basic knowledge of chemical composition and processes and safety.*
- *Entry-level chemical engineer: Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering or related field. 1-2 years of industry experience. Ability to read, analyze, interpret, and write technical procedures and governmental regulations.*

## CIVIL ENGINEERS

Civil engineers should have completed a bachelor's in engineering as there are many entry-level and above positions available in public and private firms. There are many jobs opportunities in transportation and public works engineering departments. Experience with CAD (computer aided design) software is often a plus. Here are some sample jobs and requirements:

1. *Assistant Technician (Maine Department of Transportation): Three years of experience in engineering or a related technical field—OR- an Associate Degree in Engineering or a related technical field and one year of experience in engineering.*
  2. *Transportation Worker I (MC-23-18): Must be 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalent. Required to work at a higher class as necessary and in accordance with required licenses and/or certification. Shall obtain and retain a valid Class B State of Maine license within the probationary period.*
  3. *Assistant Engineer (Maine Department of Transportation): A Bachelors Degree in Engineering or closely related field -OR- an equivalent combination of related experience and/or training.*
- Search Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) jobs here: <https://www1.maine.gov/mdot/jobs/>

## ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERS:

The work available to electrical engineers and software engineers is wide-ranging and diverse. While higher-level electrical engineers may need extensive experience and qualifications, many individuals will find good work as electricians and electrical technicians, which will have their own licensing requirements. Here are some sample jobs and requirements:

1. *Electrical engineering intern: Pursuing a bachelor degree in electrical engineering from an accredited program. Minimum of a 3.0 GPA strongly preferred. Prior internship and/or related consulting experience preferred. Excellent verbal and written communication skills. Strong problem solving and analytical skills.*
2. *Software engineer intern: Bachelor's degree (preference given to Computer Science, Engineering, Gaming and STEM majors). Exposure to one of the following Object-Oriented Programming Languages: Java/Javascript and/or a solid foundational knowledge of SQL.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Environmental engineers work on many design and planning projects involving public and environmental health. Most environmental engineers have a bachelor's degree and some work towards a master's and/or their PE license. Entry-level positions may work with public or private firms such as water and soil conservation districts or waste management companies. Wastewater management may have its own certifications or requirements.

## INDUSTRIAL AND SYSTEMS ENGINEERS

Many industrial engineering professionals work as industrial or process engineers. Some continue their education or acquire engineering experience, so that they can work as managers or consultants. However, there are entry-level positions as industrial technicians, associates and interns in a variety of settings. Here are some sample jobs and requirements:

1. *Associate engineer (Bath Iron Works): Associates Degree in Computer Science or Engineering related field required, BA preferred. Experience with VBA coding in MS ACCESS Required. 5 years preferred. Experience working with MY SQL, Oracle SQL, C#, CATIA Knowledgeware preferred. Excellent verbal, written communication and customer relation skills preferred. Familiarity with CATIA preferred. Familiarity with AutoCAD preferred.*
- Search Bath Iron Works engineering jobs here: <https://careers-gdbiw.icims.com/jobs/search?ss=1&searchCategory=873&searchLocation=12781-12803-Bath> (Please note that permanent residency or citizenship may be required for some jobs that require security clearance).

## MECHANICAL-ENGINEERS

Mechanical engineers work in a variety of settings designing, repairing and maintaining machines and systems. There are many positions for entry-level or more advanced mechanical engineers within manufacturing. Some entry-level positions in manufacturing and maintenance require a high school or associates degree, along with some key skills and possible certification. Here are some sample jobs and requirements:

1. *Manufacturing Engineer: Bachelor's degree (BS) in engineering or equivalent combination of education and experience. 0-3 years engineering experience in a manufacturing environment. Experience working in a GMP, FDA, ISO and USDA regulated environment preferred.*

# 2

# EDUCATION EVALUATION

**OVERVIEW:** You will need to have your international education evaluated before you can take the PE exam, or before you can become an engineering intern (EI) in Maine. The Maine Engineering board designates NCEES as the only evaluation company who can complete this evaluation for EI and PE purposes. The evaluation will determine if you have met the NCEES engineering education standards.

### How long will this take?

- Consider how long it may take for your educational institution to send official documents to the evaluator if applicable. Consider the time it may take to have your documents translated.
- Your application will remain 'active' for 6 months after you initiate the process.
- Once all documents are received, the evaluation usually takes around 2 weeks to complete.

### How much will it cost?

- Evaluation: \$350, Re-evaluation: \$100, Transmission to an additional licensing board: free
- Fees are paid at the end of the application process. Note that all refunds will be subject to a \$50 administrative fee.
- There is a \$75.00 fee to re-open a file that has gone in-active after 6 months.
- There could be a fee for translations, which could amount to several hundred dollars.

- While most foreign-educated engineers will require an educational evaluation, you do not need to do an evaluation if you attended an ABET-accredited institution, or if your degree is recognized as equivalent under international accreditation. Make sure here: <http://main.abet.org/aps/Accreditedprogramsearch.aspx>
- You will need to begin your online application for the evaluation before you can access the transcript request form and see the specifics of what is required. Begin your evaluation here: <https://account.ncees.org/login>

### YOU WILL NEED:

All applicants must provide the following from all universities attended and for all college level coursework and degrees earned. See more in the FAQ's here: <https://ncees.org/records/ncees-credentials-evaluations/credential-evaluations-faqs/>

- Official academic transcript (directly from your institution).
- Official diploma or certificate of graduation (could be a notarized copy)
- Official course descriptions (could be provided by you and translated if not in English).

### REQUESTING OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS:

- NCEES only accepts official documents, which means all transcripts must come directly from the university (though you can provide your own course descriptions and diploma copies). However, sometimes institutions refuse or are unable to send official transcripts. If you are in this situation, the only way around this requirement is to get a waiver from the State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers. An applicant should submit a letter to the Board with their application explaining that they have inquired about a NCEES Credentials Evaluation and they are requesting a waiver from the Board for NCEES to examine their unofficial document, and they should explain why they cannot obtain original documents. The applicant should include a copy of the documents they currently have, so the Board has an idea what NCEES would be basing the evaluation on. If the Maine board grants you a waiver, NCEES can complete the evaluation, but the evaluation and license will only be good for work in Maine.

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

- All course descriptions are required. Original language descriptions should be included.

### NEXT STEPS:

- NCEES will evaluate your education based on the 'NCEES Engineering Education Standard', which you can see here: <https://ncees.org/engineering/ncees-engineering-education-standard/>
- If your education is found to be equivalent to the NCEES engineering education standards, the board will be notified that you have completed the educational requirement. You will also have access to your evaluation. If the evaluation shows that you are deficient, NCEES will note those deficiencies and forward them to the board, who will determine acceptable ways to fill those gaps.

### PLEASE NOTE:

**Having educational deficiencies does NOT disqualify you from being eligible to take the exam.**

**Any deficiencies noted by the board can be remedied with coursework.**

## A note on translations:

- If official transcripts cannot be provided in English, a translation from a certified translation company is required. Copies of foreign education documents are not acceptable. Original language documents must still arrive to NCEES directly from the institution.
- If your diploma cannot be provided in English, a translation from a certified translation company is required. Both the native language document and the translated version must be submitted.
- If official course descriptions cannot be provided in English, a translation from a certified translation company is required.

# 3

## FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGINEERING (FE) EXAM

**OVERVIEW:** The Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam is generally your first step in the process to becoming a professional licensed engineer (P.E.). It is intended to be taken upon completion of a bachelors in engineering degree. The FE exam is a computer-based exam administered year-round at NCEES-approved Pearson VUE test centers.

### How long will this take?

- Consider how long it will take you to study for this exam
- The FE exam is given nationwide each year, year round.
- Examinees will be provided three attempts in a 12-month period.
- The exam is computer-based, is timed, and is 6 hours long including breaks.

### How much will it cost?

- An exam fee of \$175.00 is payable directly to NCEES during the registration process.

- While some states require that you have a bachelors degree before taking the FE exam, Maine does not have any pre-test requirements for the FE exam. However, you will need to be able to prove that you have completed a bachelors degree, or that you are in your final year of your degree.
- Be sure to register for the discipline-specific version (chemical, civil, electrical, environmental, industrial, mechanical, or other discipline) of the FE exam for your engineering major.
- The FE exam includes 110-questions. The exam appointment time is 6 hours long.
- Register for an FE exam by logging in to your MyNCEES account and following the onscreen instructions: <https://account.ncees.org/login>.
- Prepare for the FE exam by reviewing the rules, reading the reference materials, understanding scoring and reporting and viewing the pass rates, on the NCEES website.
- Download and review the examinee guide for all rules and procedures related to the exam: <https://ncees.org/exams/examinee-guide/>.
- There is no minimum English proficiency requirement to take the FE exam (like the TOEFL). However, the FE is a timed test and you will not do well if your English level, reading comprehension and speed are not high enough to complete the test.

## Preparing for the exam:

--Study all the information provided in the *FE Reference Handbook*: [http://www.engineering.uco.edu/~aabuabed/index\\_files/fe\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.engineering.uco.edu/~aabuabed/index_files/fe_handbook.pdf). The NCEES FE Reference Handbook is the only reference material that can be used during the exam. It will be in an electronic format during the exam so you should become comfortable using the handbook on the computer.

--In addition to reviewing the handbook and finding some exam preparation materials online, make sure you take some timed practice tests.

--NCEES supplies exam prep materials for each discipline, at a fee. Review the materials here:

<https://ncees.org/exams/exam-preparation-materials/>

--Review some free FE exam prep materials through this website:

<https://www.ppehq.com/fe-exam-prep.html#free>

--NCEES FE Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiZ0hjHNI9jzR8RW69ndkjlgH8b-zjOew->



# 4

## WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT

**OVERVIEW:** All PEs must complete four to eight years of verifiable engineering work experience (years vary depending on education). You will need someone in a supervisory role to sign off on this experience using the employment verification form. In addition, you will need five reference letters completed. Three of these letter writers must be licensed PEs who are familiar with your work. Read below for details on this requirement.

### *WHAT KIND OF WORK DOES IT NEED TO BE?*

Look for employment in a firm or other workplace with professional engineers on staff. Your exact job title is not relevant but you just need to work under a legally practicing engineer in some capacity, though they don't need to be your official supervisor. It is assumed that you will have increasing responsibility in your position. When you are applying for a job, make sure to speak with the employer about your plans to become a PE and fulfill the work experience requirement. If you change employers and/or supervisors over this four-year period, you must have all supervisors submit documentation to account for the full amount of qualifying experience.

### *WORK EXPERIENCE FORM:*

Have your employer fill in this form to document the completion of your required work experience. This will need to be someone in the company who is familiar enough with your work that they know your general duties and responsibilities. This employer does not need to be a PE, but you will need PEs to fill in the reference forms, so it is important that you work with PEs in some capacity. Access the form here: <https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/documents/2014%20PE%20Employment%20Verification%20Form.pdf>

### *PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE FORM:*

You will need five reference letters from individuals familiar with your work. Three of these must be from licensed PEs who you have worked with in some capacity. Access the form here: <https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/documents/2014%20PE%20Reference%20Form.pdf>

### *GETTING CREDIT FOR PAST WORK EXPERIENCE:*

If you have four plus years of experience working as an engineer in another country, there could be some situations in which you could receive credit for your work. You should submit your application and contact the board about your unique work experience. You may need to provide extra verification of your work experience. Contact the board to speak with someone about your work experience:

Maine State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers.

- Website: <http://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/>
- Email: [professional.engineers@maine.gov](mailto:professional.engineers@maine.gov)
- Phone: (207) 287-3236

Please note: verification and references will be accepted from Canadian Professional Engineers and chartered engineers from the UK and Australia.

# 5

# APPLYING TO THE BOARD

**OVERVIEW:** Once you have completed all the previous steps (transcript evaluation, FE exam, work experience and corresponding letters), you are ready to apply to the Board to take your PE exam. The Board is responsible for reviewing your work experience credentials before you take the exam. If you have already successfully applied to be an Engineering Intern (EI), you do not need to re-submit transcripts and FE test scores. Once you successfully take the PE exam, you will update the Board and your application for PE licensure will be complete.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?:

- Once you apply initially, the application will stay open for a period of up to five years, in case it takes some time.
- The Board will notify you within a few weeks with their decision regarding your readiness to schedule the PE exam.

## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?:

- The application fee is \$25

Review the Maine Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers info and download all necessary forms for licensure here: <https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/licensure/licensure.html#original>

You will need to send in the application for licensure, found here: <https://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/documents/2014%20PE%20Application%20Form.pdf>, along with the documents listed below. Remember, if you are already an Engineering Intern in Maine, you will not need to provide the documents in steps 1 and 2.

1. Make sure the Board receives your transcript and evaluation from NCEES.
2. Make sure the Board receives your passing FE exam, using the Exam/Licensure Verification Form or electronic verification sent directly to the Board office.
3. Upon completion of your required work experience (years vary), make sure your employer(s) submit completed Engineering Employment Verification Forms directly to the Board office.
4. Make sure the Board receives the five reference forms (three must be from PEs).
5. Complete and sign an application.
6. If you are approved, register for and schedule your exam (see details on [page 8](#))

## AFTER YOU HAVE PASSED THE EXAM:

7. Once you are notified that you have passed the exam, send payment of the appropriate licensure fee to the Board office.
8. Your license will be sent to you upon confirmation of successful completion of the PE exam, including a receipt of the licensure fee.

## Contact Information

*Maine State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers*

- Mailing Address: 92 State House Station Augusta, Maine 04333-0092
- Physical Address: 295 Water Street, Suite 207 Augusta, Maine 04330
- Phone: 207-287-3236
- Fax: 207-287-3239
- Email: professional.engineers@maine.gov
- Website: <http://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/>

# PASSING THE PE EXAM

**OVERVIEW:** Taking the PE test is the last step towards licensure. You will need to apply to the state to indicate that you have completed the education and work experience requirement, and to show proof of your successful FE test results. You will then register for the PE exam in your specialty through NCEES. Read below for tips on successfully completing the exam.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?:

- The PE Exam consists of a full day of testing in one morning and one afternoon session of 4 hours each.
- The PE exam is offered two times a year, in April and October.
- Registration opens several months in advance, but you must first apply to the board for approval to take the test.
- The PE exam is 8-hours with 80 questions.

## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- Check the state-specific costs for your discipline here: <https://ncees.org/engineering/#maine>
- Generally, the computer based PE test is PE \$375.00 and the paper version is \$350.00.

The Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) exam tests for a minimum level of competency in a particular engineering discipline. It is designed for engineers who have gained a minimum of four years' post-college work experience in their chosen engineering discipline.

- For exam-specific information, select your discipline to learn more about the structure of the exam, and download the provided PDFs: <https://ncees.org/engineering/pe/>
- Review the test booklet for all up-to-date exam rules and procedures: <https://ncees.org/exams/examinee-guide/>
- You will register and schedule your test through NCEES. Create your account here: <https://ncees.org/supplemental/launch-login/>

## PLEASE NOTE:

- Maine does not license by discipline (Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Structural, etc.), though other jurisdictions do. PE is the only credential Maine grants for professional engineering licensure, and with this license you can practice in any discipline in which you are competent. You can take any of the eight-hour PE exams, or the 16-hour SE (Structural Engineering) exam and the result here will be the same PE license. However, if you practice in a discipline-specific jurisdiction, they will license you in specific area(s) based on the PE exam or SE exam you took.

## EXAM PREP:

Set aside enough time to study for the PE exam. The PE exam is long and difficult. Review the pass-rates here:

<https://ncees.org/engineering/pe/pass-rates/>

## EXAM PREP FROM NCEES

- <https://ncees.org/exams/exam-preparation-materials/>
- <https://account.ncees.org/exam-prep/>

## OTHER EXAM PREP:

- <https://ppi2pass.com/prep-course>
- <https://www.brightwoodengineering.com/pe-exam>



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