The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) - Professional Engineers in Industry (PEI) Interest Group has created this overview guide to assist senior engineering students and recent graduates through the licensure process. This process can be confusing at times for those working through the details on their own.

"BASICALLY BEING A PE MEANS THAT YOU ARE AT THE TOP OF YOUR GAME, TOP OF YOUR PROFESSION. THEY DON'T JUST HAND THAT OUT TO ANYBODY."

-- RANDAL E. RIEBEL, P.E.

The NSPE PEI Interest Group hopes that this overview provides some useful information as you begin the path toward professional licensure. Good luck!
In the United States, professional licensing boards in each state license engineers. These licensing boards confer a PE license to a licensure candidate after the candidate meets a combination of requirements in education, experience, and examinations.

States usually require four steps to get an engineering license:

1. **Obtain a four-year degree in engineering from an ABET-accredited university**

2. **Pass the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam**

3. **Accrue four years of engineering experience**

4. **Pass the Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) exam**

Engineers were required to complete the above steps in that exact order since the beginning of professional licensure in the 20th century.
Many states boards have recently decoupled when someone is eligible to sit for the PE exam from the engineering experience required for licensure.

Decoupling the PE exam from the experience requirement allows an EIT (Engineer in Training - someone who has passed the FE exam) to take the PE exam prior to applying for licensure or earning the necessary four years of experience.

Essentially, engineers who have passed the FE exam and have graduated with a relevant degree from an accredited university can sit for the PE exam whenever they feel ready to do so.

The PE exams remain exactly as they were before 'decoupling' occurred. The exams continue to be developed based on specifications set by engineering practitioners to evaluate the knowledge of an engineer with at least four years of practical experience. Being able to take the exams without waiting to obtain four years of engineering experience may be beneficial for many examinees as some subjects will be fresher in their mind closer to their course work as very few engineers will be using every subject on the exam on a daily basis.

Those interested in taking the FE or PE exam should reference state/territory requirements at ncees.org/engineering.
Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Exam

Usually, the first step in becoming a professional licensed engineer (PE) is the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam. It is a test that is designed for recent graduates and students who are close to finishing an undergraduate engineering degree from an EAC/ABET-accredited program. The FE may also be required by some state licensing boards from engineers applying for licensure in their mid-career.

The FE is offered in seven disciplines:
- FE Chemical
- FE Civil
- FE Electrical and Computer
- FE Environmental
- FE Industrial and Systems
- FE Mechanical
- FE Other Disciplines

Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) Exam

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

Details on the various FE exams can be found at ncees.org/engineering/fe.

Information on the various engineering disciplines for the PE exam can be found at ncees.org/engineering/pe.
MyNCEES is a system offered by NCEES to simplify the overall application process by allowing a user to maintain all of their licensure-related information in one system. The information includes education, experience, exam results.

MyNCEES also provides a place to record continuing professional competency (CPC) credits which many states require to maintain licensure. For people working for companies that perform engineering work in multiple states, this is a benefit as they will need to apply for licensure in all states they perform work in.

Services available through MyNCEES include:
- Exam registration and scheduling
- Exam preparation materials
- NCEES Records Program for multi-state licensure
- NCEES Credentials Evaluation Service for non-U.S. engineering degrees
- CPC Tracking

The system can also be used to record the following:
- College transcripts
- Exam results
- Employment verifications
- Professional references

MyNCEES is an excellent place to make note of people that can serve as references in the future as one moves through their career. Possible references could be professors, managers, other engineers, professional/technical societies members, etc. Experience and possible references should be documented in the system as soon as possible so that the required experience can be documented. It is always easier to track this as it is being performed than trying to document years of experience in the future.

In most situations, states require some of the references to be licensed professional engineers that are familiar with an applicant’s work. As some people may have difficulty in finding appropriate references, they should contact their state board for guidance in who could serve as an appropriate reference.
NCEES began the process of transitioning exams to computer-based testing (CBT) in 2011. CBT offers the benefits of enhanced security for exam content and uniformity in testing conditions as well as greater scheduling flexibility for many exams. The CBT exams are offered at approved Pearson VUE test centers.

Many CBT exams are administered year-round. However, exams that have a smaller examinee population are administered on a single day each year.

Additional information and test schedules may be found at ncees.org/exams/cbt.