

ASEE Position Statement on Professional Licensure of Baccalaureate ETAC/ABET Graduates

Issue:

Professional Engineering (PE) licensing is regulated by the states. Model laws for states to adopt are created by the National Council of Examiners in Engineering and Surveying (NCEES).

Currently, all states permit EAC/ABET Engineering graduates to become licensed professional engineers. However, only some states permit baccalaureate graduates from ETAC/ABET accredited Engineering Technology programs to obtain professional licensure despite the fact that with only minor exceptions, examinations to become a PE are the same in all states. A majority of states that permit ET baccalaureate graduates to attain professional licensure do so only after imposing additional course, work experience or even degree requirements on ET baccalaureate graduates.

Those states that have prohibitions or additional requirements create economic hardship for ET baccalaureate graduates by making the licensure process longer or impossible. Lengthening or restricting the licensure process keeps ET baccalaureate graduates from well-paying engineering jobs.

A 2017 report by the National Academy of Engineering indicates that ET baccalaureate programs have at least twice the percentage of African-American students and significantly more economically disadvantaged students than EAC/ABET Engineering programs. The National Society of Professional Engineers regularly reports that Licensed Professional Engineers earn more money and have more opportunities than unlicensed engineers. A recent tagline from NCEES boasts "P.E. Prove yourself without saying a word."

Position:

The American Society of Engineering Educators, a society made up of educators in both Engineering and Engineering Technology programs, strongly supports the position that baccalaureate graduates from ETAC/ABET accredited Engineering Technology programs are fully capable of protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public and should, therefore, be eligible, without additional requirements, to become Licensed Professional Engineers.

Qualifying Statements:

There is no expectation that any of the requirements for licensure be changed other than to make ETAC/ABET baccalaureate graduates eligible to sit for all required exams and be able to accrue experience in the same way and at the same rate as EAC/ABET graduates. Nor is there an expectation that any industry-based need for licensing be changed.

January 2020