Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)-
Scheduling and Taking the National Council of Examiners for
Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) Exams for Professional
Engineer (PE) and Professional Land Surveyor (PLS) Applicants

1) What professional applicant types are required to take and pass NCEES exams for licensure in California?

Professional Land Surveyor (PLS) applicants as well as the following Professional Engineer (PE) applicants are required to take and pass professional NCEES exams as a requirement for licensure: Agricultural, Chemical, Civil, Control Systems, Electrical, Fire Protection, Industrial, Mechanical, Metallurgical, Nuclear, Petroleum and Structural.

Please note that the NCEES Architectural, Environmental, Mining, Naval Architectural and Software exams are not administered in California, and there are no plans to offer the exams in the future.

2) Do I need to notify the Board when I take an NCEES exam or wait for the Board’s approval before I take an NCEES exam?

The only applicants that need to wait for Board approval before they take an NCEES exam are Structural applicants and PE and PLS applicants that are requesting a Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) or Fundamentals of Surveying (FS) exam waiver. Those applicants must submit the appropriate application and documentation by the final filing date for the desired exam cycle.

All other applicants do not need to notify the Board before they take an NCEES exam. Create a MyNCEES account and register with NCEES as soon as the NCEES registration system opens. Applicants only need to notify the Board once they have passed the NCEES exam. Applicants are encouraged to take and pass the appropriate NCEES exam before they submit an Application for Licensure to the Board and take the state specific exam(s) (if state specific exams are required for the license type that they are applying for).

If you have already submitted an Application for Licensure to the Board, and have subsequently passed an NCEES exam, submit a Notice of Successful National Exam to the Board.
View the Process Flowcharts-Scheduling Exams and Applying for Professional Engineer (PE) or Professional Land Surveyor (PLS) Licensure for a depiction of the process.

3) Am I required to take and pass the NCEES exam before I apply to take the state specific exam(s)?

It is recommended that you take and pass the NCEES exam before you apply and take the state specific exam(s), but it is not required. You can take the exams concurrently.

4) After I pass the NCEES exam, is there a timeframe or deadline for when I need to submit my Application for Licensure to the Board?

No, there is no timeframe or deadline.

5) What are the NCEES opening and closing registration dates?

Check the NCEES website here for engineering exams and here for land surveying exams.

6) Which afternoon module should I choose for my PE exam?

You must take the PE exam in the discipline in which you want to be licensed, but you can choose any module that you would like to take within that discipline. For example, if you wish to become licensed as a Mechanical Engineer, you may choose any one of the three Mechanical PE exams.

7) Do I need to submit an NCEES Record (formally known as an NCEES Council Record) to the Board?

The Board only accepts NCEES Records for those applicants already licensed in another jurisdiction and seeking comity licensure in California. The Board does not accept NCEES Records from applicants applying for initial licensure. Additional information is located here on the NCEES website.
8) I have a Special or Religious Accommodations request for my NCEES exam. Whom do I contact?

The Board does not handle Special or Religious Accommodation requests for NCEES exams. You must request the accommodations during registration with NCEES. Additional information is located here on the NCEES website.

9) I have questions about the NCEES exam that I am taking. For example, when and how will I receive my admission notice? Can I change my exam location or exam module? What is the exam format? How much are the NCEES exam fees? What is the testing environment like? What are the identification (ID) requirements? What items are allowed in the exam room? Which calculators are approved for use at the exam? Can I bring reference materials? What about exam breaks?

Refer to the NCEES Examinee Guide located here on the NCEES website.

10) If I don’t pass the NCEES exam, do I have to pay and register with NCEES again?

Yes. You have to pay and register each time you take an NCEES exam. Wait until NCEES opens registration for the next exam cycle and register with NCEES. Continue registering until you have passed the exam. You do not need to notify the Board until you have passed the NCEES exam.

11) I am applying for licensure in California, but I passed an NCEES exam in another state. Do I need to send verification of the passed exam to the Board?

Yes. You are required to submit a complete application to the Board, including verification of passed exams. Login to your MyNCEES account to see if a verification is in your record. If it is not in your record, you need to request the verification through NCEES.

12) I have to take state specific exams for the license type that I am applying for. Where can I find information regarding state specific exams, such as what I can bring to the exam, the calculator policy, and the exam format?

Examination candidate information is located here. A flowchart depicting the process is located here.