FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) REGARDING THE STRUCTURAL ENGINEER (SE) EXAM

1) What is the Structural Engineer (SE) licensure application process, when is the exam offered, and what exam will I take if my application is approved?

The exam schedule and information regarding the application process is located on the Board’s website. Detailed information regarding the exam is available on the NCEES website.

Applicants applying for SE licensure will take the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) 16-hour SE exam. The NCEES 16-hour SE exam was offered for the first time in April 2011, and is the only SE exam currently administered by NCEES. The exam replaced the separate NCEES SE I and II exams.

2) What is the format of the NCEES 16-hour SE exam?

The NCEES 16-hour SE exam is a breadth and depth exam offered in two 8-hour components, administered on consecutive days. Applicants must receive a passing score on both 8-hour components of the exam within a 5-year period in order to pass the SE exam. Applicants do not need to take both 8-hour portions of the NCEES 16-hour SE exam during the same exam administration.

The 8-hour Vertical Forces (Gravity/Other) and Incidental Lateral component focuses on gravity loads and lateral earth pressures. The 8-hour Lateral Forces (Wind/Earthquake) component focuses on wind/earthquake loads.

Detailed information regarding the exam is available on the NCEES website.

3) I do not have a California Civil PE license. Am I required to have a California Civil PE license to apply for a SE license in California?

Yes. Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 426.10 requires that an SE applicant hold a valid, unexpired Civil Engineer license in California. You can view the pertinent code section here. To check to see if you qualify for licensure you may also view the flowchart located here.
4) **What are the exam requirements to become licensed as a SE in California?**

You must meet or have met one of the following exam scenarios:

- Pass the NCEES 16-hour SE exam *(exam currently offered by NCEES)*;
- Or
- Passed the NCEES SE II exam and California SE Seismic exam *(CSESE)* *(exams no longer offered)*;
- Or
- Passed the NCEES SE II exam and Washington State SE III exam *(exams no longer offered)*.

5) **I passed the NCEES SE II exam in the past, but not the California SE Seismic exam (CSESE). Can I get credit for passing the NCEES SE II exam?**

No. The NCEES SE II exam was part of the previous requirements for licensure as a SE in California and was used only in conjunction with the CSESE. The CSESE was discontinued after the October 2011 exam administration. You need to pass the NCEES 16-hour SE exam to become licensed as a SE.

6) **I passed the CSESE in the past, but I did not pass the NCEES SE II exam. Can I use my CSESE as credit for an 8-hour portion of the NCEES 16-hour SE exam?**

No. You need to pass both components of the NCEES 16-hour SE exam.

7) **I have taken and passed the NCEES SE II and the Washington State SE III. Are these exams accepted for SE licensure in California?**

Yes, these two exams are accepted for comity licensure as a SE in California.

8) **I have taken and passed the 8-hour NCEES SE I exam and the 8-hour NCEES SE II exam. Are these two exams accepted instead of the NCEES 16-hour SE exam since together they equal 16-hours?**

No. The NCEES SE I exam is considered a principles and practice level exam for initial licensure as a Professional Engineer.

The SE license is considered a mastery-level license and is tested at the mastery-level. The NCEES 16-hour SE exam is considered a mastery-level exam.