

Societies, Registration and Licensing

Engineering Societies

All engineers are professionals in accordance with the definition of engineering, one of which states that "engineering is the profession in which a knowledge of the mathematical and natural sciences gained by study, experience and practice is applied with judgment to develop ways to utilize, economically, the materials and forces of nature for the benefit of mankind." Professional engineers also observe a code of ethics, exercise judgment and discretion while providing their services, and are involved in a confidential relationship with their clients. Professional engineers enjoy legal status, use professional titles, and associate together through professional societies.

An excellent way to begin learning about the status of the professional engineer is to join the student branch of a professional society relevant to your interests. At WPI, students are encouraged to join the student branches of such societies as the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists (AAEES), American Society for Metals (ASM), American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM), the American Nuclear Society (ANS), APICS, the Institute of Industrial Engineers (IIE), the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME), the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE), the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), the American Chemical Society, (ACS), the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), and Women in CyberSecurity (WICyS). For information on these organizations, see the appropriate department head.

Engineering Registration and Licensing

In order to become a "Professional Engineer" (P.E.) and enjoy the legal status which affords certain rights, privileges and responsibilities, engineers must qualify through the formal procedures of registration and licensing. Procedures vary from state to state, but in most cases, the applicant must first pass a Fundamentals of Engineering Examination.

Fundamentals of Engineering Examination

To become legally registered as a professional engineer (P.E.), candidates must submit data regarding formal education and technical ability to the appropriate state Board of Registration for Professional Engineers. Two major examinations, The Fundamentals of Engineering Examination (also called Engineering-in-Training, E.I.T.) and the Professional Practice Examination (P.P.E.), must be successfully completed as a measure of technical ability. The Fundamentals Examination must be taken first; the Professional Practice Examination must then be taken after a designated period of substantial professional experience, usually a minimum of four years. The Fundamentals Examination and Professional Practice Exams are administered year-round.

There are several possible qualification paths to registration as a P.E. The quickest and most common route is to obtain a degree from an ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology-formerly ECPD) accredited curriculum, and to acquire the specified amount of suitable professional level experience in addition to passing the two examinations mentioned above. There are seven ABET accredited curricula at WPI-biomedical engineering, civil engineering, chemical engineering, electrical and computer engineering, environmental engineering, industrial engineering, manufacturing engineering, and mechanical engineering. Persons with an unaccredited degree can still become registered in most, but not all, states by submitting evidence of a longer "apprenticeship" period (variable by states) before taking the two examinations. Students should strive, if at all possible, to pursue a program which is accredited by ABET and should work closely with their advisors and appropriate major departments to assure that the total program qualifies for accreditation, since this will greatly facilitate the achievement of registration in the future.

ALL SENIOR ENGINEERING MAJORS IN BME, CE, CHE, ECE, AND ME ARE URGED TO TAKE THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGINEERING EXAMINATION WHICH IS GIVEN ON CAMPUS EACH FALL AND SPRING. There will never be a better time!

Refresher courses for students, alumni and practicing engineers are available. Successful completion of this examination is normally the first step in eventually obtaining the right to use the initials "P.E."

WPI's Office of Continuing Education sponsors an eleven session EIT Refresher course from mid-January through mid-April on the WPI Campus. The course, which is taught by WPI faculty, includes reviews of the major topics covered on the exam. For further information, call 508-831-5517.

Description of Fundamentals of Engineering Examination (F.E.E.)

Typical Date Given: Last Saturday in October (also in April).

Typical Application Deadline: First week in September (also in January).

Duration: Eight hours.

Type: Multiple choice, open book.