

BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS, AND GEOLOGISTS

2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300, Sacramento, California, 95833-2944

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GEOSCIENCES DEGREE WORKSHOP AGENDA

Qualifications for Licensure as a Professional Geologist

Public workshops regarding the minimum curriculum for a qualifying geological sciences degree

The Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists (BPELSG or the Board) is holding two workshops to receive input to identify the minimum curriculum required for a qualifying geological sciences degree in order to apply for licensure as a Professional Geologist.

The minimum qualifications for licensure as a geologist in California are described in Business and Professions Code section 7841 (see box for complete text).

The Board has long recognized that there is confusion among potential licensees regarding the requirement for “*Graduation with a major in geological sciences from a college or university*”. The confusion appears to be due to several factors including:

- the lack of a standardized university curriculum for a geology or geoscience degree;
- the lack of a national accreditation program for a geology or geoscience degree;
- the proliferation of interdisciplinary earth science and environmental degrees in response to current environmental challenges;
- the misperception by some that because geologists often work in the environmental field, environmental science (or related interdisciplinary degrees) and geology are equivalent.

7841. Qualifications for registration as a geologist

An applicant for licensure as a geologist shall have all the following qualifications:

(a) Not have committed any acts or crimes constituting grounds for denial of licensure under Section 480.

(b) Graduation from a college or university with a major in geological sciences or any other discipline that, in the opinion of the board, is relevant to geology.

(c) Have a documented record of a minimum of five years of professional geological experience of a character satisfactory to the board, demonstrating that the applicant is qualified to assume responsible charge of this work upon licensure as a geologist. This experience shall be gained under the supervision of a geologist or geophysicist licensed in this or any other state, or under the supervision of others who, in the opinion of the board, have the training and experience to have responsible charge of geological work. Professional geological work does not include routine sampling, laboratory work, or geological drafting.

Each year of undergraduate study in the geological sciences shall count as one-half year of training up to a maximum of two years, and each year of graduate study or research counts as a year of training.

Teaching in the geological sciences at college level shall be credited year for year toward meeting the requirement in this category, provided that the total teaching experience includes six semester units per semester, or equivalent if on the quarter system, of upper division or graduate courses.

Credit for undergraduate study, graduate study, and teaching, individually, or in any combination thereof, shall in no case exceed a total of three years towards meeting the requirement for at least five years of professional geological work as set forth above.

The ability of the applicant shall have been demonstrated by the applicant having performed the work in a responsible position, as the term "responsible position" is defined in regulations adopted by the board. The adequacy of the required supervision and experience shall be determined by the board in accordance with standards set forth in regulations adopted by it.

(d) Successfully pass a written examination that incorporates a national examination for geologists created by a nationally recognized entity approved by the board, and a supplemental California specific examination. The California specific examination shall test the applicant's knowledge of state laws, rules and regulations, and of seismicity and geology unique to practice within this state

The Board intends to amend Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 3031 to define the minimum curriculum for a qualifying geological sciences degree and to clarify the educational and experience requirements for licensure as a Professional Geologist. The Board is asking for input from academia, licensed geologists, and members of the public and is hosting two workshops to provide a forum to communicate with interested parties. The agenda for each of the two workshops will be identical and is described below. A copy of the presentation will be posted on-line, 10 days prior to the first workshop.

The proposed requirements could include:

- granting 2 years of experience credit for a geology degree meeting the proposed minimum curriculum.
- defining the minimum curriculum based upon
 - the State of California and Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG) geologist task analysis surveys,
 - the 2012 recommendations by the Geologist and Geophysicist Technical Advisory Committee,
 - a 2015 informal coursework survey of colleges/universities in California offering geology or related degrees
 - a review of published research papers on the topic of geologist qualifications
 - a review of licensure requirements for other US States and Puerto Rico
 - ASBOG and professional society models
- granting 1 year experience credit for
 - a geology degree with a non-approved curriculum; or,
 - a related science degree with a reasonable and rational nexus to geology, plus completion 30 semester units in geologic science of which 24 units are in the third or fourth year, or graduate courses
- granting an additional one-half year of experience credit for upper division coursework that specifically addresses the seismicity and geology unique to the State of California [the subject of the California Specific Examination required by §7841 (d)].
- Granting credit for graduate work.

The current language from §7841 stating that “*In no cases will a candidate be granted more than 3 years of education credit, in any combination of the following, towards the total educational and work experience requirement of 5 years*” would be preserved.

Workshop Dates

February 19, 2016, 10 am – 12 noon

Dept. of General Services
Highgrove Room, 2nd Floor
3737 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501

February 26, 2016, 10 am – 12 noon

BPELSG Conference Room
2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95833

Agenda

1. Opening remarks (BPELSG Executive Officer or Board Member)
2. Presentation by Laurie Racca PG, Senior Registrar for Geology & Geophysics
 - History of geology licensure qualifications in California
 - Description of the basis for the proposed draft requirements
 - Summary of the proposed draft minimum curriculum for a qualifying geoscience degree
3. Comments and input from the public

After the February 26, 2016 workshop, a web video of the presentation will be posted on-line for viewing by interested parties unable to attend one of the workshops.

Interested parties may also submit comments to the Board via email (Laurie.Racca@dca.ca.gov) or U.S. Mail (Attn: Laurie Racca, 2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA 95833). Comments are requested by March 31, 2016. After considering all input, the proposed amendments to Section 3031 would be presented at a future Board meeting with a request that the Board approve moving forward with rulemaking. Additional opportunities for public comment will be available during the formal rulemaking process.

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PUBLIC COMMENT FORM
GEOSCIENCES DEGREE WORKSHOP
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qualifying geological sciences degree

You may use this form to send in your written comments and suggestions regarding the development of a minimum curriculum for a qualifying geological sciences degree. Use of this form is optional and it is provided for your convenience. Comments will be accepted with or without the use of this form. Interested parties may submit comments to the Board via email (Laurie.Racca@dca.ca.gov) or U.S. Mail (Attn: Laurie Racca, 2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA 95833). Comments are requested by March 31, 2016. After considering all input, the proposed amendments to Section 3031 will be presented at a future Board meeting with a request that the Board approve moving forward with rulemaking. Additional opportunities for public comment will be available during the formal rulemaking process.

Name:

Agency or Organization (if applicable):

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Comments:

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