

Virginia Grapples With Licensure Regulations

The Virginia Society of Professional Engineers has recently provided the state licensing board with comments about proposed regulatory changes regarding the FE exam, qualifying experience, and the value of teaching experience.

The Virginia Board for Architects, Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, Certified Interior Designers, and Landscape Architects closed the public comment period on February 1. The board's goal is to determine if the regulations should be repealed or amended as necessary for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare.

VSPE's comments addressed the following three questions: (1) Should the section that defines requirements for the PE exam be amended to require all applicants to pass the FE exam? (2) Should the 20 years of qualifying experience be

considered equivalent to the bachelor of science degree? (3) Should teaching experience, as defined by the regulations, count as no more than one year of qualifying experience toward licensure, as is the case for earning a graduate or doctoral degree?

In short, VSPE believes the answers to all three questions are no.

The Society recommended that the board maintain a limited equivalency provision that provides an exemption from the FE exam for candidates who have 20 years of qualifying experience or a doctorate in engineering. The rigors of attaining either an engineering doctorate or 20 years of qualifying experience, VSPE argues, supersedes the achievement of a passing score on the FE exam.

VSPE emphasized that although it considers 20 years of qualifying

experience equivalent to the achievement of passing the FE exam, it doesn't consider the experience equivalent to successful completion of an engineering, engineering technology, or related-science curriculum of four years or more.

Regarding the third question, VSPE stated that limiting teaching experience to one year would compromise the academic responsibilities of professors, who would be forced to leave their teaching profession to obtain three additional years of qualifying experience in the public or private sector. The Virginia Society believes that allowing one year of equivalent experience for a graduate or doctoral degree holder is appropriate because the degree holder would follow into teaching or public- or private-sector work to obtain the remaining three years of qualifying experience.

America's Most Wanted: Electrical, Manufacturing, and Mechanical Engineers

Engineers with electrical, manufacturing, and mechanical expertise are in hot demand for 2016, according to a Randstad Engineering labor market report. Employers who are seeking professionals in these disciplines will need to boost salary offers to attract and retain the best candidates.

Engineers will be in high demand this year, even in industries that have not typically required engineers in the past, says Richard Zambacca, president of Randstad Engineering. "The healthcare and entertainment industries are just two examples of sectors that will look to hire more engineers in 2016 to support new and innovative technologies."

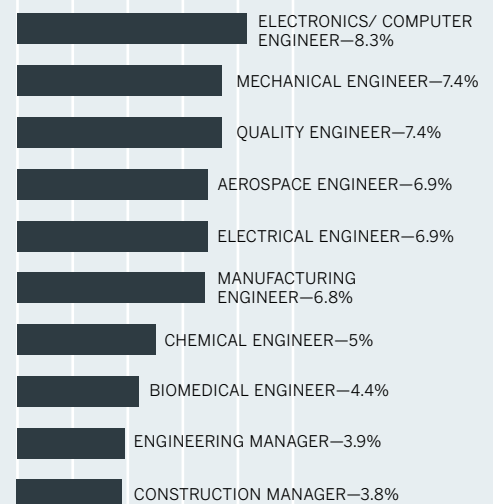
As manufacturers increase their product lines and facilities, they are driving a higher demand for manufacturing engineers this year. These businesses are generally looking for engineers with a bachelor's degree and 5–10 years of

experience. The national average starting salary for a manufacturing engineer with 3–10 years of experience is \$79,814.

Mechanical engineers are increasingly attractive to a large number of industries because of their broad skills. Businesses want mechanical engineers with 5–10 years of experience and the ability to adapt to changing technologies and innovative materials. The national average salary for a mechanical engineer with 3–10 years of experience is \$84,714.

Top electrical engineering candidates with 5–10 years of experience must have the ability to work on multidisciplinary project teams that include marketing and sales staff, technicians, and customer service representatives. Since electrical engineering unemployment remains low in the US, potential employers will have to provide more generous salary offers, Randstad reports. The national average salary for an electrical engineer with 3–10 years of experience is \$90,295.

Top 10 Engineering Jobs by Salary Increase



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