

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR FILING FOR PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR LICENSURE IN ALABAMA

Table of Contents

Requirements for Licensure	Timeframe for Receiving License
Application Package	Certificates of Authorization Suggested
Completing the Application	Study Material for ALSS Exam
ALSS Exam	FAQ's

Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors

PO Box 304451
Montgomery, AL 36130-4451

(334) 242-5568

www.bels.alabama.gov

The RSA Union (**FedEx/UPS mail only**)
100 North Union Street, Suite 382
Montgomery, AL 36104

Point of Contact

If you have any questions concerning the application or requirements contact Bonnie at (334) 242-5098 or you may e-mail your questions to bonnie.kelly@bels.alabama.gov

You may check the status of your application on the website under Applicants then under Status or call between 2:00 and 3:30 only central standard time.

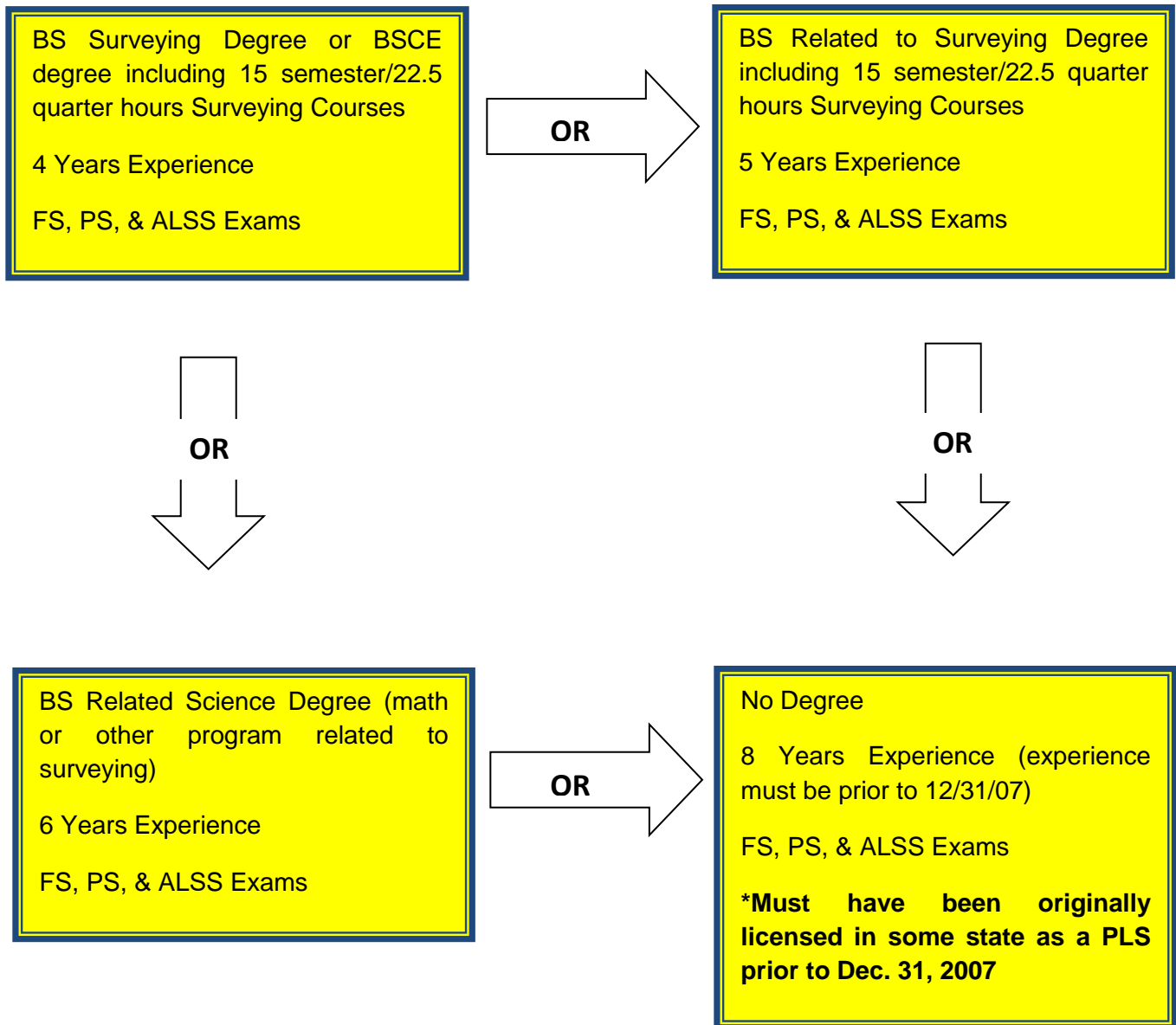
Important

If you have this application for 6 months or longer before filing, check with the Board office or on-line to make sure there are no changes to the form, requirements or deadlines before using.

4 Paths to PLS Licensure

Effective July 1, 2018

If you are uncertain if you meet the requirements prior to filing an application, go to our website under Contact Us and find the contact information for the staff member who handles the LS applications.



APPLICATION PACKAGE

If you are uncertain if you meet the requirements prior to filing an application after reviewing page 2 of these instructions, go to Contact Us on our website and find the contact information for the staff member who handles the LS applications. If after filing the application you do not meet the licensing requirements of this State, your application will not be returned and your fees are non-refundable.

Substitute forms, such as resumes, personal work samples or copies of application forms filed with other state boards are not acceptable and, if received, will be returned.

NCEES Record - An NCEES Record is a record containing your transcript, verification of experience, verification of exams and references. In order to have an NCEES Record, you must submit all of the above information to NCEES to be held by them for release to other States. **You do not have an NCEES Record just by taking the NCEES exams.**

IMPORTANT - NCEES offers NCEES Records for those who are already licensed (comity) and for those who are applying for initial licensure (passed exams but not licensed in any state). We only accept the NCEES Records for comity applicants. **We are NOT accepting an NCEES Record for initial licensure.**

To apply for LS licensure **without** a NCEES Record, you must complete and submit the following items:

- application and application fee
- transcripts directly from the college/university to the Board office
- experience verification (you will need 1 for each engagement)
- references (you will need 5)
- verification of the FS & PS exams and current licensure (if applicable)
- board evaluation of transcript form (if your degree is not in surveying or if it's a BSCE + 15 hours of surveying)
- proof of citizenship

Closed Application

To re-apply for the ALSS exam if your application has been closed, you must complete and submit the following items:

- application – **only** complete questions 1-15, 17 (list all experience since previous application), 18, 20 and 22-23
- application fee
- verification of experience since previous application is required
- proof of citizenship

To apply for LS licensure **with an NCEES Record** you must complete and submit the following items:

- application – **only** complete questions 1-15, 20 and 22-23
- application fee
- NCEES Record (contact NCEES and have them send your record to the Board office)
- board evaluation of transcript form (if your degree is not in surveying or if it's a BSCE + 15 hours surveying)
- proof of citizenship

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The application form is to be typed and all questions must be answered. The application, instructions and associated forms can be typed in the PDF file and printed. The application must have an original signature. **E-mail or faxed applications will not be accepted.**

Previous Exam Application Closed: If your application for the ALSS exam has been closed in Alabama, you will be required to file a new application. No transcripts nor additional references are required. You should complete questions 1-15, 17, 18, 20 and 22-23. Under question 17, you must list your experience since your last application. Verification of this experience is required under Question 18.

Questions 1 through 5 should be self explanatory

Question 6:

Furnish information where you passed the Fundamentals of Surveying (FS) and Principles and Practice of Surveying (PS) exams, exam date. **Your application cannot be accepted for the ALSS exam unless you have successfully passed both the FS and PS exams.**

If you do not hold an NCEES Record and you did not take the exams in Alabama, you will need to go to the Verification of Licensure link (links to NCEES website) and submit the electronic verification form to the state board(s) where you passed the FS and PS exams. If your license is not current in the state where you passed the PS exam, a verification request must also be sent to the state board where you are living and currently licensed. If the state board where you took the exams is not listed, you will need to contact the state directly and have them send directly to the Board office verification of your exams and/or license.

Questions 7 & 8 should be self explanatory

Question 9 If you are applying for the ALSS exam (comity/already licensed) and you have an NCEES Record, only complete questions 1-15, 20 and 22-23 and contact NCEES to have your record sent.

IMPORTANT - In order for an NCEES Record to be acceptable in Alabama, the experience must be verified by PLS's. Experience verifications and References are not the same. References are character references. We are having issues with the experience being verified by non-PLS's to include human resource personnel and self verification. Alabama requires experience to be verified by your PLS Supervisor or by a PLS Associate who worked at the same location who has personal knowledge of your experience. If your NCEES Record is received and the minimum amount of experience required is not verified by PLS's, you will be notified that you need to have the experience verified by PLS's who have personal knowledge of your experience.

Questions 10 through 15 should be self explanatory

Questions 16 If you have a degree, a transcript is required. **We do not accept faxed nor emailed transcripts.** You must contact the university and have the transcript sent directly to the Board office.

To qualify as a related to surveying graduate, you must be a graduate of a four year program that included a minimum of 15 semester hours or 22.5 quarter hours of surveying courses which the Board may determine is related to surveying. It will be necessary that you submit a Request for Board Evaluation of Related to Surveying form.

To qualify as a related science graduate, you must be a graduate of a four year program which the Board may determine is related science. It will be necessary that you submit a Request for Board Evaluation of Related Science form.

To qualify as a surveying graduate with a BSCE, you must be a graduate of a four year program that included a minimum of 15 semester hours or 22.5 quarter hours of surveying courses which the Board may determine is equivalent to surveying. It will be necessary that you submit a Request for Board Evaluation of Surveying form.

Question 17 The experience record should begin after graduation from a university or the first employment after high school, whether or not it was land surveying experience. **All time must be accounted for, including military time, illness, unemployment, etc.** Each company you worked for is considered an engagement. If you were promoted within a company, do not indicate a change in engagements. If an engagement was part time work, indicate part time and the number of hours you worked per week. Experience must be started on the application form first. If you need to use additional pages, please number accordingly. Experience cannot be anticipated. **You must have the required experience when the application is submitted.**

The only experience prior to graduation the Board is currently accepting is if you were in a formal co-op program through your school or if it took you 6 years or longer to get your BS degree and you were working gaining land surveying experience under a PLS. The maximum time allowed is 6 months. This experience must be verified by a PLS.

Part time work is evaluated by the Board on a case by case basis. You will receive less than half credit for part time experience. This experience must be verified by a PLS.

You will receive one year's credit for a MS or PhD in land surveying in a program whose undergraduate or graduate degree is accredited by ABET or 2 years for a MS and PhD in land surveying

Note: If you anticipate making application for Engineering Licensure or you are already certified as a Engineer intern or licensed as a Professional Engineer, Section 330-X-6(e) of the Administrative Code states "Experience credited on the engineer intern or professional engineer application as engineering experience cannot be claimed as land surveying experience on the land surveyor intern or professional land surveyor application. Experience credited on the land surveyor intern or professional land surveyor application as land surveying experience cannot be claimed as engineering experience on the engineer intern or professional engineer application."

Experience: Experience must be progressive (not one year of experience repeated several times) and include the following five major elements of professional surveying and a minimum of three months of accumulated experience is required in each one of these major elements:

- (1) Research
- (2) Legal Principles/Reconciliation
- (3) Computations/Analysis
- (4) Documentation/Land Information Systems Monumentation
- (5) Measurements/Locations

Questions 18 and 19

You must send an experience verification form to your PLS supervisor or associate for each surveying engagement listed under Question 17 that can be verified. If you are presently licensed in another state working under your own supervision, you should send a verification form to a PLS associate familiar with your work. If an engagement cannot be verified, list under Question 21 why the experience cannot be verified. Any experience not verified does not count.

All experience must be verified by PLS supervisors or associates who were licensed prior to the time being verified. If no PLS supervisors or associates were inside or outside the company you worked with that has personal knowledge of your experience, if there was graduate surveyor in the company, that individual can file an experience verification form and background information form for the board's review. If the board determines they are substantially equivalent to a PLS at the time you worked with them, you will get credit for the experience. If not, no credit will be given.

You are to send the experience verification form and reference form along with an envelope for them to return the forms to you to those individuals you list under questions 18 and 19. The individuals are to seal the envelope shut and sign across the back flap of the envelope. **DO NOT** open the envelope when it is returned to you. You are to collect the sealed envelopes and submit them along with your application.

Questions 20 through 23 should be self explanatory

ALSS EXAM

The Alabama Land Surveying Standards, History, and Law (ALSS) exam is a computer based test (CBT). It allows for the exam candidate to sit at their computer and be proctored remotely. The exam is a 2 hour **closed book** exam. You must be approved by the Board prior to sitting for the exam. Currently the exam is given on an on demand basis. Once you submit the exam request form and fee, you will be contacted about an exam date.

Below is a list of what is needed to take the ALSS Exam:

- Computer with added Webcam or a Laptop with a built in camera (cell phones will not be acceptable)
- Broadband Internet access
- Built in speaker on computer or external speaker
- Email
- Current Photo ID
- A quiet room where you will not be interrupted during the test

Prior to the exam, you will need to arrange for a test connection for the remote proctoring. It should only take a few minutes to test the connection. Once that has been done, a test date can be scheduled.

TIMEFRAME FOR RECEIVING LICENSE

A license to practice as a Professional Land Surveyor is granted to a person who meets Alabama's professional land surveying licensure requirements, who has never had a license revoked or invalidated and who has never been convicted of a felony. A lapsed license is not considered invalidated.

We do not have a temporary permit or 1 time job permit. Alabama Law allows for a license to be issued once the ALSS exam has been passed. Applications are approved in house for the exam approximately 3 weeks after the application is completed provided there are no felonies or anomalies on the application. If there are felonies or anomalies on your application, your application must be reviewed at a scheduled Board Meeting. The Board meets approximately every two months. The Board meeting dates and filing deadlines are tentatively set and subject to change. Your application must be complete by the filing deadline if it has to be reviewed at a Board Meeting. The dates and filing deadlines can be found on the website under Other Info then under Dates & Deadlines.

In order for a license to be issued, all information pertaining to your application must be received in the Board office and you must pass the ALSS exam prior to the license being issued. Once issued, you are eligible to practice.

CERTIFICATES OF AUTHORIZATION

Section 34-11-9 of the Licensure Law provides partnerships, corporations or firms offering land surveying services in Alabama through individual licensed professional land surveyor as agents, employees, officers or partners are required to file for and receive a Certificate of Authorization by the Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors within 30 days of your date of licensure.

Suggested Study Materials for the Alabama Surveying, Standards, History & Law

Study Material	How to get the Materials
Code of Alabama 1975 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title 34 Chapter 11 (Professions & Businesses) – The legislation establishes and enables the Board 	www.bels.alabama.gov
Code of Alabama 1975: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title 35, Chapters 2-4, 8 (Property) Title 11, Chapter 17 (Counties & Municipal Corporations) Title 18, Chapter 1 (Eminent Domain) Title 6, Chapter 2, Article 34 & Chapter 5, Article 200 (Civil Practice) 	http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/ACASLoginie.asp
Board Administrative Code	www.bels.alabama.gov
Alabama Department of Health Rules for Onsite Sewage Disposal, 420-3-1	http://www.adph.org/onsite/Default.asp?id=1168
ASPLS Standards of Practice (SOP)	http://www.aspls.org/?page=StandardsofPractic
Alabama Boundary Law	by Jeffery Lucas https://aspls.site-ym.com/store/ListProducts.aspx?catid=345439
Brown's Boundary Control & Legal Principles - 6 th Edition	Book Store - by Robillard, Wilson & Brown
Restoration of Lost or Obliterated Corners & Subdivision of Sections	Dept of Interior, Bureau of Land Management http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/cad/tools.html
BLM Manual of Surveying Instructions – 1973 & 2009	Dept of Interior, Bureau of Land Management http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/cad/tools.html (1973) and http://www.nsps.us.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&PageID=952 (2009)
Miscellaneous Information pertaining to Alabama land surveying	www.bels.alabama.gov/PLS-Applications.aspx
Evidence and Procedures for Boundary Location – 5 th Edition	Book Store - by Walter G. Robillard, Donald A. Wilson
National Flood Insurance Program Elevation Certificate & Instructions – FEMA Form 81-31	http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1383
FEMA Regulations	http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-flood-hazard-mapping/publications-regulations
Definitions of Surveying and Associated Terms – ACSM	Book Store – published by ACSM
Interpreting Land Records	Book Store - by Donald A. Wilson
Field Notes – Alabama Secretary of State	http://sos.alabama.gov/vb/inquiry/inquiry.aspx?area=Lands

FAQ's

General

Who do I make my check payable to?

PE & LS Fund.

Do you accept credit cards?

No.

Does my LS application have to be typed?

Yes. There are no exceptions. You can type in the PDF file on the website.

How can I find out my application status?

You can check your status on the website under Applicants then under ALSS status, e-mail [Bonnie](#) or call (334) 242-5098 between 2:00 - 3:30 CST only.

What address do I send my application to?

It depends on how you are sending it. First class mail - use the PO Box address. Overnight mail - use the street address.

Can the LS application form be faxed or emailed?

No. We must have the application with the original signature and the check.

How long does it take to receive the board meeting results?

Approximately 2 weeks. No information can be released by phone, fax or email.

How long does it take to receive my certificate and license number?

Approximately 2 weeks after passage of the ALSS exam the license number can be issued. TNo information can be released by phone, fax or email.

I am registered in Canada. Will I be able to obtain licensure in Alabama?

Yes if you meet Alabama's requirements such as education, work experience, you have passed the NCEES FS & PS exams and you have a United States Social Security Number.

Does the company I work for or own need to be licensed?

If the company your work for or own offers to perform or performs land surveying work, you will be required to have a CA within 30 days of your date of permanent licensure unless your company name is your given name (ex. John Doe, PLS).

Can the FS and/or PS exams be waived?

No. Our law has no provisions to waive either exam regardless of degrees, experience or being licensed in another state.

Does Alabama accept Veteran's Preference Points?

No. If you had Veteran's Preference Points added to your exam score to give you a passing grade, we cannot accept that exam. Georgia adds Veteran's Preference Points to scores. If you are a veteran and took the exam(s) in Georgia, you may need to check with the Georgia Board to see if Veteran's Preference Points were added to your score.

I do not have a degree but I do have 20+ years of experience. Can I apply for licensure?

Yes as long as you were originally licensed in another state as a PLS prior to December 31, 2007, you can have at least 8 years of experience prior to 12/31/07 verified by PLS's and you are currently licensed in some state.

What part of the application am I required to complete?

Unless you have an NCEES Council Record (comity/already licensed only), you are required to complete the full application and related forms. You do not have an NCEES Record just by taking the exams.

What exams am I required to take?

You are only required to take our 2 hour Alabama Surveying, Standards, History and Law Exam (ALSS) as long as you have taken and passed the NCEES FS and PS without veteran's preference points.

Do you have a 1 time job permit?

Since land surveyors are required to take our 2 hour history and law exam, we do not have a 1 time job or interim permit.

I will be submitting my NCEES Council Record. What other documents will I need to submit?

You need to complete only questions 1-15, 20 and 22-23 of the application and submit with the application fee and citizenship documents.

ALSS Exam

Do I need to send the ALSS exam fee and request form in with my application?

No. We will let you know when to send it in.

I have passed the FS exam in Alabama. How do I find out what my Land Surveyor Intern (LSI) number is?

You can check our website through the License Search. If you do not find your name, contact our office. You may not have made application or had your transcript sent from the school after passing the exam.

I'm certified as an LSI in Alabama but I don't know the date I took the exam. What do I put in the exam date block under Question 6?

You can just put an about date. We will go back to our files to verify the correct date.

Do I have to be certified as an Land Surveyor Intern before I apply for the exam?

No but your transcript will be required.

How many times can I take the exam?

Your application is approved for unlimited attempts within 1 year.

What happens after my 1 year is up?

You will be notified that your application is closed and you will be required to file another application and meet the requirements at the time of reapplication.

Will I be allowed to take the exam if I have been charged or found guilty of a crime?

You would be required to file documentation concerning the matter. If you have lost your civil rights, you would not be certified or allowed to take the ALSS exam until your civil rights have been restored.

Do I have to be a resident of Alabama to take the ALSS exam?

No. The ALSS exam is a CBT exam and remotely proctored.

What can I use during the ALSS exam?

Only a calculator. The exam is closed book.

I've paid for the exam and can't take the exam on my scheduled date. Can my exam fee be refunded or applied to another exam? The exam fee cannot be rolled to another exam. The ALSS exam fee cannot be refunded. Our law does not provide for either. We would set up another test date.

Can I find out my score?

No. We only release the results as pass or fail.

Where can I find study material?

The Alabama Land Surveying Standards, History & Law study material can be found on our website under Applicants then under LS Forms.

When will I receive my exam results?

Usually the results are mailed within a week of the exam.

What is covered on the exam?

The Alabama Land Surveying Standards, History & Law exam specifications can be found on our website under Applicants then under LS Forms.

Education

Are correspondence classes/distance learning degrees acceptable? We only accept BS degrees in surveying from Great Basin College and from the University of Maine.

Does my transcript have to be mailed directly to you from my school?

Yes. We do not accept faxes, emails and we cannot accept a transcript from the applicant.

I received my land surveying degree outside the United States. Is that acceptable?

Yes. Your foreign degree will be required to be evaluated by one of the board approved agencies.

Does my foreign degree have to be evaluated?

Yes. The Board requires that your education be evaluated through National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (NCEES) regardless of additional degrees received. Please contact NCEES at www.ncees.org to request an education evaluation packet. They will provide you with information and instructions regarding what they need to evaluate your education. We must have a course-by-course evaluation. There is no waiver to this requirement.

My degree was evaluated by a different agency than the board approved agency. Will you still accept my evaluation?

No. The board only accepts evaluations performed by NCEES. There is no waiver to the requirement.

It will take too long or it's been too long since I graduated to have an evaluation performed. Can it be waived?

No. There is no waiver capability.

My degree is not in surveying. Can I still apply and how much experience do I need?

Yes you can apply. The experience required would depend on your degree. You would need to review the Request for Board Evaluation of Transcript Surveying Form (use if you have a BSCE degree and 15 semester hours or 22.5 quarter hours of surveying courses, Request for Board Evaluation of Transcript Related to Surveying Form (requires 15 semester hours or 22.5 quarter hours of surveying courses) and the Request for Board Evaluation of Transcript Related Science Form to see which educational requirements you meet. When you determine which category you fall into, complete that Request for Board Evaluation of Transcript form and submit the form with your application. If you fall into the Surveying category, you are required to have 4 years of experience after graduation under a licensed land surveyor. Related to surveying category, you are required to have 6 years of experience after graduation and under a licensed land surveyor. If you fall into the Related Science category, you are required to have 8 years of experience after graduation and under a licensed land surveyor.

Are 2 year degrees acceptable?

No.

Do you need transcripts from all my schools or just where a land surveying degree was earned?

Just from the school where you received your land surveying degree.

Experience

Is experience prior to graduation acceptable?

Only if it was received in a formal co-op program through the school or if it took you 6 years or longer to receive your BS degree and you were working gaining land surveying experience under a PLS. Either way, the experience must be verified by a PLS. You will receive no more than 6 months credit.

Can I get credit for part time work?

Yes only if that is all you were doing. You would not get credit for working full time and then doing part time work on the side. You would receive approximately less than half credit for the experience and it would need to be verified by a PLS.

Can I get credit for working while obtaining my degree?

No. Administrative Code 330-X-6-.01(d) states that time spent in land surveying work while attending school can only be credited as education experience or work experience but not as both.

Do I get credit for my MS or PhD?

Yes if the MS or PhD degree is an ABET accredited surveying degree and it is not used to change the category of curricula on the application (ex. degree other than surveying + ABET MS = RSV instead of RS. You could not get 1 year's credit for the MS. You would get 1 year's credit for the MS and an additional 1 year for the PhD.

I cannot have all of my experience verified. Is this acceptable?

Yes if you have at least the minimum experience verified.

Experience Verifications and Reference Forms

How do I verify land surveying experience if my supervisor is not licensed?

If your supervisor is not a PLS but is a graduate land surveyor, you can have them complete a Background Information Form on the website under Applicants then under LS Forms as well as the Experience Verification form. The board would review to determine that when you were working together if this person would have sent in an application to become licensed would they license them. If so, you would get credit for the experience. If not, then you would not.

How do I verify experience if my supervisor is deceased?

If your supervisor dies before you make application, you can get another licensed individual in the company to verify your experience. If there is no one inside the company that is licensed or a graduate land surveyor that can be reviewed as substantially equivalent, you can get a licensed individual outside the company who is knowledgeable of your experience. You would also be required to specify how this person has knowledge and how often they have reviewed your work.

What if there are no PLS's in the company I work for. How do I get my time verified?

You would either need: (1) a graduate land surveyor that can be reviewed by the board as substantially equivalent; (2) a PLS outside the company who has knowledge of your experience to verify and the details of how this person has knowledge would need to be provided or (3) have an agreement **approved by the Board before it is entered into** between you and a PLS who will review your work for a certain amount of time.

Do my endorsers have to be licensed in Alabama?

No.

I am self employed. Can I verify my own experience?

No. Either a PLS in your company must verify, a PLS outside your company who has knowledge of your land surveying experience or a graduate land surveyor in your company that the board can review as substantially equivalent.

I am going to use a graduate land surveyor to verify my experience for the board to review as substantially equivalent. What forms do I need to send to the verifier?

You would need to send them the experience verification form and the background information form.

Can I use a substantially equivalent for my reference?

No. The substantially equivalent individual is for experience verification only. You must have 3 licensed PLS's for the references.

I don't know 3 PLS's that have knowledge of my experience that I can use for references. Can I still apply?

No. Administrative Code 330-X-7-.02(2), (3) and (4) states 3 of the 5 must be licensed with knowledge of your experience. There is no waiver to this requirement.