

## **Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Announces Changes to Exam Requirements to Become a Registered Professional Land Surveyor in Texas**

At the November 17, 2022, meeting of the Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (TBPELS), changes were approved to the examination requirements to become a Registered Professional Land Surveyor (RPLS) in the state of Texas. Starting in May 2023, the current RPLS exam will be replaced with a combination of the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) Principles and Practice of Professional Surveying (PS) exam and a new Texas State Specific Exam (TSSE).

### **Background:**

The change to the examination requirements came before the board after several years of research, data collection and analysis, and exam development. The transition was monitored, reviewed, and recommended to the Board by the Surveying Advisory Committee (SAC), as required by the Professional Land Surveying Practices Act and Board rules.

Surveying in Texas requires knowledge of its unique history and surveying procedures that must be evaluated as part of becoming an RPLS. The Board and SAC recognize that these unique topics are not covered by the NCEES PS exam. The reason for the development of the TSSE is to supplement the national NCEES PS exam and evaluate an RPLS candidate's knowledge and understanding of these specialized state-specific topics.

Exam development of the TSSE has been a rigorous and in-depth process, following a nationally recognized procedure. The TSSE exam content is based on information gathered during the Professional Activities and Knowledge Study (PAKS) that was sent to all active Texas RPLSs. Feedback from the PAKS provided a blueprint for the exam, which covers areas of practice and law specific to surveying in Texas. The current RPLS exam item bank was reviewed by an exam workgroup composed of Texas RPLSs. The workgroup was tasked with developing, evaluating, and refining exam content for the new TSSE.

**Transition Schedule:**

December 2022 – Public communication of NCEES PS and TSSE conversion

Spring 2023 – Finalize reference guide for TSSE Exam

April 2023 – Administer final traditional RPLS exam

May 2023 – Roll-out TSSE blueprint and reference materials

May 2023 – Open NCEES PS exam registration for approved Texas applicants

October 2023 – Administer first TSSE exam

**Moving Forward:**

To become an RPLS after April 2023, applicants will need to pass both the NCEES PS and TSSE exams. The exams can be taken in any order after application approval by the Board. Once a candidate has passed an exam it will not expire. The TSSE will be a 4-hour in-person written exam covering the knowledge areas that are specific to Texas and not already covered on the national PS exam.

The first TSSE will be offered in October 2023. To provide more opportunities for applicants, the TSSE exam may be offered more frequently – 3 times per year rather than the 2 times per year the current RPLS exam is offered. Tentatively, the TSSE will be offered in Spring (March), Summer (June), and Fall (October). Information about the TSSE exam, including exam dates, exam preparation, specifications, and reference materials will be available on the TBPELS website starting in May of 2023.

The Board will make the NCEES PS exam registration available starting May of 2023. The PS exam is a computer-based exam and is available year-round at Pearson VUE testing centers located throughout Texas and the nation. For more information about the exam including test preparation and reference materials, please visit <https://ncees.org/surveying/ps/>.