

PLS-I-8/2009

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

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Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors

PO Box 304451  
Montgomery, AL 36130-4451

(334) 242-5568  
fax (334) 242-5105  
[www.bels.alabama.gov](http://www.bels.alabama.gov)

The RSA Union (**FedEx or UPS mail only**)  
100 North Union Street, Suite 382  
Montgomery, AL 36104-3702

**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](mailto:bonnie.kelly@bels.alabama.gov)

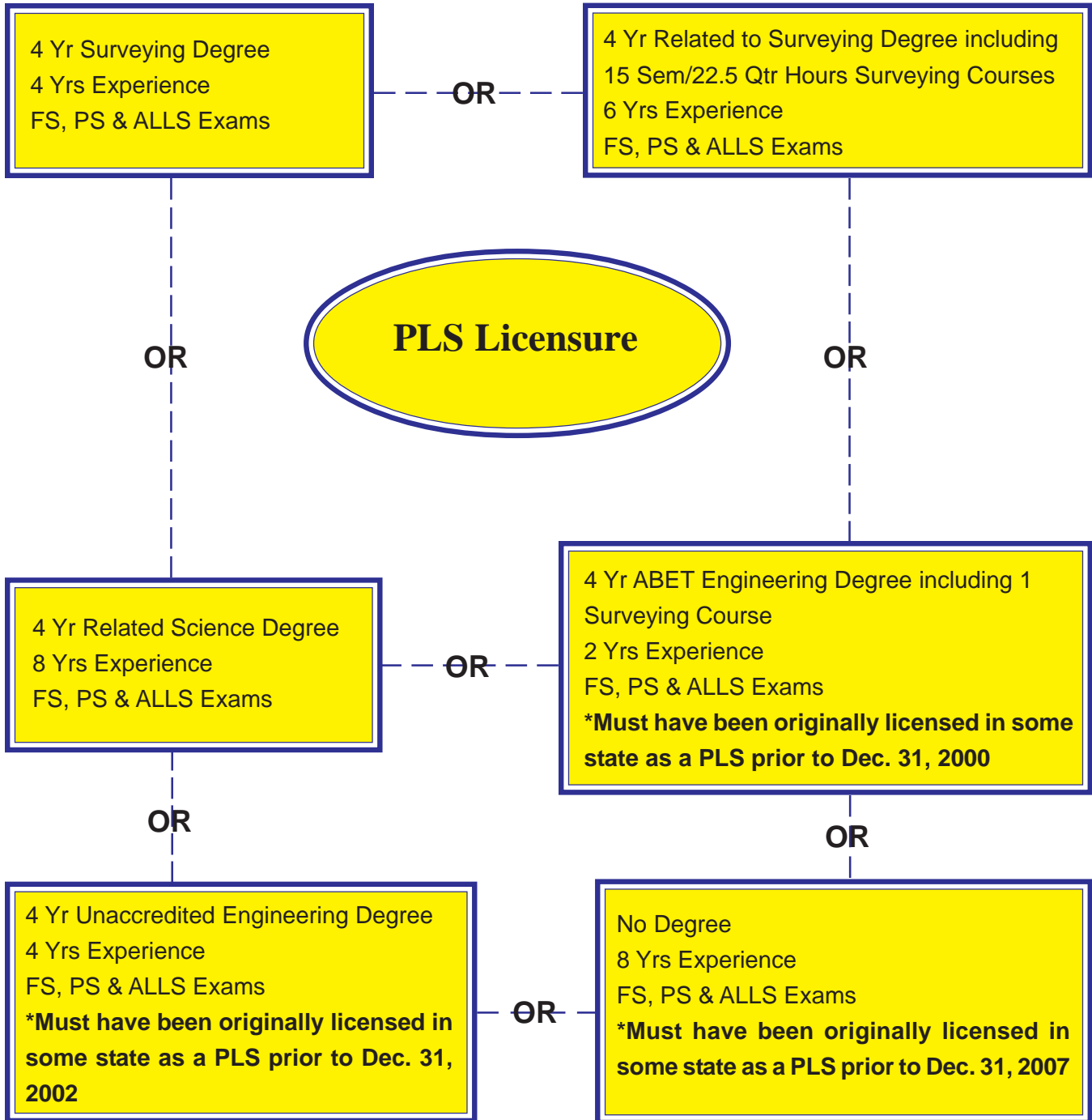
You may check the status of your application on the website under Forms & Status or call between 2:00 and 3:30 **only** central standard time.

**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.**

# 6 Paths to PLS Licensure

Effective August 1, 2009



## **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE**

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. If you are filing as a related to surveying graduate, 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. If you are filing as a related science graduate, it will be necessary that you submit a *Request for Board Evaluation of Related Science form*.

### **APPLICATION PACKAGE**

On our web site, please review under Forms & Status then under PLS & ALLS Application Forms and then under LS Licensure Requirements which forms you need to complete and the Board meeting dates and filing deadlines.

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.

### **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 from our web site. The application must have an original signature and notary seal. **E-mail nor faxed applications will be accepted.**

**Questions 1 through 4** should be self explanatory

**Question 5:** Passage of the FS examination (Exam 1), either in Alabama or in another State, is required before you may take the PS (Exam II) and ALSS (Exam III).

The dates and deadlines for the exam can be found on our web site under Forms & Status then under PLS & ALLS Application Forms and then under Dates & Deadlines.

**Exam attempts:** A new exam candidate, if approved to take the exam, is approved for four exam attempts for each exam or 5 years whichever occurs first.

**Previous Exam Application Closed:** If your application has been closed in Alabama, you will be required to file a new application. No transcripts, additional references nor verifications are required. You should complete questions 1-15, 17, 20 and 23. Under question 17, you must list your experience since your last application. Verification of this experience is **NOT** required.

**Question 6:**

Indicate in which state you passed the Fundamentals of Surveying (FS) and/or Principles and Practice of Surveying (PS) exam(s), in Alabama or in another jurisdiction. If you passed the FS or PS in a jurisdiction **other than Alabama**, please complete the shaded areas on the *Verification of Licensure form* and send that form to the state board. If your license is not current in the state where you passed the PS exam, a verification form must also be sent to the state board where you are living and currently licensed.

**Questions 7 & 8** should be self explanatory

**Question 9** An NCEES Record is a record containing your transcript, verification of experience, verification of exams and references. All of the above information must have been submitted to NCEES to be held by them for release to other States. **You do not have an NCEES Record just by taking the NCEES exam(s).** If you have an NCEES Record, only complete questions 1-15, 20 and 23.

**Questions 10 through 16** should be self explanatory

**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.** You must send a verification (V-2) form to your PLS supervisor or associate for each surveying engagement listed 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.

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. Normally 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.

**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) LegalPrinciples/Reconciliation
- (3) Computations/Analysis
- (4) Documentation/Land Information Systems Mounumentation
- (5) Measurements/Locations

**Questions 18 through 23** should be self explanatory

## ***FEES***

Required fees are as follow

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Application fee | \$25   |
| Examination fee | \$85 FLS, \$225 PLS, \$100 ALLS - <b>We will let you know when to send the exam and licensure fees</b> |
| Licensure Fee   | \$25   |

**All fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.**

Personal, company or cashier **checks should be made payable to the PE & PLS fund**

You will receive notification of when you need to submit the exam fee.

The Licensure fee is due within 30 days of your licensure date. You will receive notification that your application has been approved for licensure. If the fee is not paid within 30 days, a new application will be required for licensure.

## ***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 LAND SURVEYING HISTORY & LAW

| <b>Study Material</b>   | <b>Who to contact to get</b>  |
|---|---|
| Code of Alabama 1975 Title 34 Chapter 11  | provided on website   |
| Administrative Code   | provided on website   |
| Brown's Boundary Control & Legal Principles - 4 <sup>th</sup> Edition (Jan. 1995)   | Book Store - written by Walter G. Robillard, Donald A. Wilson   |
| Restoration of Lost or Obliterated Corners & Subdivision of Sections  | Dept of Interior, Buereau of Land Management - (202) 452-5125 or <a href="http://www.cadastral.net/lao/lao-all.htm">www.cadastral.net/lao/lao-all.htm</a> |
| BLM Manual of Surveying Instructions 1973<br><a href="http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations/Instruction_Memos_and_Bulletins/blm_man">www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations/Instruction_Memos_and_Bulletins/blm_man</a> | Dept of Interior, Bureau of Land Management - (202) 452-5125 or   |
| Clark on Surveying & Boundaries - 7 <sup>th</sup> Edition   | Book Store - written by Walter G. Robillard, Donald A. Wilson   |
| Skelton on Boundaries   | Book Store  |
| Sections from The Faircloth Notes   | provided on website   |
| Alabama Land Records  | provided on website   |
| Miscellaneous Study Information   | provided on website   |
| Alabama Health Department Rules for Onsite Sewage Disposal  | AL Health Dept - <a href="http://www.adph.org">www.adph.org</a>   |
| Manual of Practice for Land Surveying in Alabama  | ASPLS - (334) 279-7040  |
| Alabama SOP - latest edition  | <a href="http://www.aspls.org">www.aspls.org</a>  |
| Evidence and Procedures for Boundary Location - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition (1994)  | Book Store - written by Walter G. Robillard, Donald A. Wilson   |
| 27 Datum Tables (Plane Coordinate Projection Tables Alabama - Special Publication No. 304)  | National Geodetic Survey (301) 713-3242   |

# 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 and then print the application or you may print the form out and type on a typewriter.

### **What if my application or other information is received after the deadline?**

Your application will be processed for the next exam. **There are no exceptions per the Board members.**

### **How can I find out my application status?**

You can check your status on the website under Forms & Status then under PLS & ALLS Application status then under the appropriate link, 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 e-mailed?**

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 the licensure fee has been paid. No 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 and you are currently licensed in some state.

## **Licensed in Another State**

### **What part of the application am I required to complete?**

Unless you have an NCEES Council Record, 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?**

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

### **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 23 of the application and submit with a \$25 check.

## **Exam**

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

No. We will let you know when to send it in. It will be after the January 15 and July 1 deadline before we ask for the form and fee.

### **After I pay the exam fee, is there anything else I have to do?**

Yes. There is now a 2 step process for exam registration. After your application has been approved by the board and you pay the exam fee, you will be notified that we received your fee and you would then need to go to ELSES' website and continue with the exam registration process to reserve your seat, select your exam and location.

### **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 [Bonnie](#). You may not have had your transcript sent from the school after passing the exam.

### **I'm certified as an LSI 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 microfilm 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 by the filing deadline and you will be certified as an Land Surveyor Intern at the board meeting the board reviews your LS exam application.

### **I was certified as an Land Surveyor Intern but I haven't renewed and my status is delinquent. Do I need to renew my LSI before I apply for the exam?**

No. The only thing renewing your LSI does is keep you in the roster and on the mailing list for newsbulletins.

### **How many times can I take the exam?**

Your application is approved for 4 failures on each exam or 5 years whichever occurs first.

### **What happens after I fail the exam 4 times or my five years 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.

### **Does me not showing up at the exam count as one of my 4 times?**

No. Only if you show up and fail.

### **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. You would only be allowed to take the FLS exam. If you have lost your civil rights, you would not be certified or allowed to take the PLS and ALLS exams until your civil rights have been restored.

**Do I have to be a resident of Alabama to take an exam?**

No but if you make application in Alabama, you will be required to come to Alabama to take the exam.

**What can I bring into the exam?**

Since NCEES administers the exam for us, you need to contact [NCEES](http://www.ncees.org) at (877) 536-7729 or [www.ncees.org](http://www.ncees.org).

**I've paid for the exam and can't attend the exam. Can my exam fee be refunded or applied to another exam?**

No. No exceptions. Our law does not provide for either.

**I failed the exam. Can I have my exam regraded?**

Yes. NCEES charges \$75 to regrade an exam. The request and \$75 check made payable to NCEES must be sent to the Board office within 30 days of your exam results. NCEES will be forwarded your request and fee. They will then take the scoring template and place it over your answer sheet to ensure the computer scored your exam correctly. There has never been a change in exam scores based on this regrade method.

**I failed the exam. Why can't I review my exam?**

NCEES and the Alabama Board reserves the right to repeat questions, and the integrity of the questions is compromised by overexposure. If some examinees are allowed to review questions, it may give them an unfair advantage over other examinees. If you fail the FS or PS exams, NCEES provides a diagnostic report that should help you determine the area you need to improve.

**How does NCEES score the exams?**

Go to NCEES' website - [www.ncees.org](http://www.ncees.org) under Exam Scoring to answer all questions concerning scoring of the exam.

**Can I find out my score?**

No. We only release the results as pass or fail. If you fail the FS or PS exam, you will receive a diagnostic report to help you determine where you need to improve.

**When are admission cards mailed?**

After you have completed Step 2 of the exam registration process, NCEES will notify you by email approximately 21 days prior to the exam that you can download your admission notice from their website. If you are taking the ALLS exam in Montgomery, the admission cards are mailed approximately 30 days prior to the exam.

**Where can I find study material?**

[NCEES](http://www.ncees.org) has study material for the FS and PS exams on their website - [www.ncees.org](http://www.ncees.org). The Alabama History & Law study material can be found on our website under PLS & ALLS Application Forms then under Exam Information.

**When will I receive my exam results?**

If you took the exam in April, approximately June 15. If you took the exam in October, approximately December 15. The ALLS exam taken in Montgomery in the board office is usually mailed within a month of the exam.

**How can I find out if you received my exam fee?**

You can check the website under PLS & ALLS [Application Status](#) down towards the bottom of the page and click on the appropriate exam link.

**What is covered on the exams?**

[NCEES](http://www.ncees.org) has available on their website all the exam content information for the FS and PS exams.

**Can my exam be proctored?**

No. If you made application in Alabama but lived in another state when you made application or if you lived here in Alabama and moved away, we would not allow the exam to be proctored.

## **Education**

### **Are correspondence classes/distance learning degrees acceptable?**

No.

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

Yes. We do not accept faxes 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 Center for Professional Engineering Education Services (CPEES) regardless of additional degrees received. Please contact CPEES at [www.cpees.org](http://www.cpees.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. If you had an evaluation performed by AACRAO or Josef Silny & Associates prior to July 1, 2009, we would accept those evaluations.

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

No. The board only accepts evaluations performed by CPEES. There is no waiver to the requirement. We would accept evaluations performed prior to July 1, 2009 by AACRAO or Josef Silny.

### **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 both the 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 with the application form. If you fall into the 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**

### **I won't have the experience by the deadline date but will have it by the test date. Can I still send in my application for that test?**

No. Administrative Code 330-X-6-.01(l) states you cannot anticipate experience. You must have the experience prior to the deadline.

### **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. It was used in conjunction with the BS to change you to an ABET graduate). 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**

**What if my endorsers do not send in my verification and/or reference form?**

It is your responsibility to make sure your endorsers return the verification and reference forms. If they refuse to send it in or it appears they won't send in, you may substitute someone in their place. Just send the new person the appropriate form and advise the board you will be making a substitution.

**Can I send in the verification and reference forms in with my application?**

We prefer them to come from the endorser to the board office. If you have them sent in with your application, they must be in a sealed envelope with the endorser's signature across the flap.

**What filing date goes on the verification and reference form?**

It depends when you want to have your application reviewed by the board. The board meeting dates and filing deadlines are on the website under PLS & ALLS Application Forms then under Dates & Deadlines.

**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 Sheet on the website under Application Forms then under LS 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 sheet.

**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.