



PLS Licensure Laws and Board Rules 2025

State of Georgia

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GA Code § 43-15-13 (2023)

(a) To be eligible for licensure as a professional land surveyor, an applicant shall:

(1) Complete the education and training requirements of subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of this paragraph as follows:

(A)

(i) Earn a bachelor's degree in a curriculum approved by the board. Such applicant shall complete a minimum of 18 semester hours in land surveying subjects acceptable to the board as a part of or separate from such degree; and

(ii) Acquire not less than three years of combined office and field experience in land surveying of a nature satisfactory to the board;

(B)

(i) Earn an associate's degree in a curriculum approved by the board. Such applicant shall complete a minimum of 18 semester hours in land surveying subjects acceptable to the board as a part of or separate from such degree; and

(ii) Acquire not less than five years of combined office and field experience in land surveying of a nature satisfactory to the board; or

(C)

(i) Earn a high school diploma or its equivalent. Such applicant shall complete a minimum of 18 semester hours in land surveying subjects acceptable to the board; and

(ii) Acquire not less than eight years of combined office and field experience in land surveying of a nature satisfactory to the board; and

(2)

(A) Pass each of the following board approved examinations:

(i) The fundamentals of surveying examination;

(ii) The principles and practices of land surveying examination; and

(iii) The laws and history of land surveying in Georgia examination.

(B) The examinations listed in divisions (i) through (iii) of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph may be taken after completion of the education requirements of paragraph (1) of this subsection; provided, however, that the examination in division (i) of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph shall be taken and passed before the examination in division (ii) of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph is taken, and the examination listed in division (ii) of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph shall be taken and passed before the examination in division (iii) of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph is taken.

(b) The board may issue a land surveyor intern certificate to an applicant who has:

(1) Completed the education requirements set forth in division (a)(1)(A)(i), (a)(1)(B)(i), or (a)(1)(C)(i) of this Code section;

(2) Passed the board approved fundamentals of surveying examination as required under division (a)(2)(A)(i) of this Code section; and

(3) Completed such additional requirements as may be required by the board through rules and regulations.

Rule 180-2-.01 General

- (1) All applications shall be made to the Board through the licensing portal available on the Board's website. Applications made otherwise will not be accepted.
- (2) An application will not be considered on file or complete, until the Board has received all data pertinent to the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the Board receives all necessary data, including the established fee, reference forms, education transcripts, and other required documents.
- (3) Applicants applying for licensure as a Land Surveyor are required to submit a minimum of four plats or maps which meet Georgia minimum technical standards. Two shall be boundary surveys, and two shall be topographic or elevation surveys. Each plat or map shall include a unique certification by the sealing land surveyor certifying that the applicant prepared the plat under their direct supervision. Comity applicants may submit plats or maps prepared and sealed by the applicant in another state. These plats should be edited appropriately to meet the standards and requirements of the State of Georgia before submittal to the board.

Rule 180-2-.02 Board Action on Applications

- (1) Notice of the Board's action approving or rejecting an application will be given to an applicant at the email address on file with the Board.
- (2) In the event the Board makes a preliminary determination that grounds may exist for rejection of an application under O.C.G.A. 43-15-15(b), it will give notice of that determination to the applicant at the email address on file with the Board. The applicant so notified may request a hearing before the Board in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.
- (3) In the event the Board rejects an application on any ground other than those set forth in O.C.G.A. 43-15-15(b) or 43-15-19, no formal hearing will be permitted before the Board. The Board may, in its sole discretion and upon the applicant's request, permit an applicant an informal conference with the Board or with a designated member thereof for the purpose of permitting the applicant to explain, but not to supplement, his/her application. No recording of such a conference will be permitted.
- (4) In the event the Board rejects an application based on insufficient experience and/or education, the applicant should not file a new application until such time as the minimum period of deferment has expired. [A period of deferment may be imposed by the Board in accordance with O.C.G.A. 43-15-15(c)]. However, the applicant may file prior to the end of the deferment period if; in the applicant's opinion, there have been substantive changes in the rate in which experience has been earned or education obtained. The new information may be filed either as a

new application or as a supplement to the original application. In either case, the required fee shall accompany each application submitted.

(5) For applications requiring that the applicant be examined, experience will be considered through the date on which such application was notarized. Experience earned between the date the application was filed and date of the next examination will be considered valid only if the applicant remains in the same, equivalent, or higher position in which he/she was employed at the time of filing and may only be claimed when the applicant files a new application or supplemental application as applicable. It is the responsibility of the applicant to keep the Board informed of substantive changes in job duties and responsibilities.

Rule 180-2-.03 Examinations, General

(1) With exception of a locally prepared examination on hydrology and the legal aspects of land surveying in Georgia, all examinations will be in accordance with the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES).

(2) Examinations may be taken only after the applicant has met the other minimum requirements as set forth in O.C.G.A. 43-15-8 and 43-15-9 and has been approved by the Board for admission to the examination as follows:

(a) Fundamentals of Engineering. Consists of a six-hour examination on the fundamentals of engineering. Passing this examination qualifies the examinee for an engineer-in-training certificate, provided he/she has met all other requirements for certification by this Chapter.

(b) Principles and Practice of Engineering Passing this examination qualifies the examinee for registration as a professional engineer, provided he/she has met the other requirements for registration required by this Chapter. Applicants shall designate the branch of engineering in which they intend to practice. The Board, after consideration of the designation and a review of the experience and other information listed in the application, shall identify the appropriate NCEES exam to be administered to the Applicant.

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Applicant will be directed to take the eight-hour NCEES exam that is applicable to the branch of engineering identified by the Applicant.

(2) If the Applicant designates that he/she will engage in the branch identified as structural engineering or the Applicant's experience is deemed to be within the branch of structural engineering, the Applicant shall be directed to take the NCEES 16-hour Structural Engineering Exam.

For purposes of this rule, "structural engineering" shall be defined as engaging in the design or analysis of "Designated Structures." "Designated Structures" are defined as follows:

a. For buildings and other structures requiring a building permit as required by the International Building Code, adopted edition, with Georgia Amendments in current effect in the state of Georgia, a Designated Structure is any building or other structure which meets any one of the following criteria:

- I. Any building structure which has risk Category of III or IV in accordance with Table 1604.5 of the International Building Code, adopted edition, with Georgia Amendments.
- II. Any building structure which has a covered gross area of 100,000 square feet or greater or has an occupied floor elevation that is 45 feet or more above the average ground level of the building.
- III. Any building structure which with height to least width aspect ratio of the structural lateral load resisting system greater than or equal to seven.
- IV. Any building structure which is designed using nonlinear time history analysis or with special seismic energy dissipation systems.

b. For bridges and other related transportation structures, a Designated Structure is one that is considered to be a "complex bridge", as described in the Georgia Department of Transportation Consultant Prequalification Manual, which includes the following:

- I. Bridges of spans longer than 300 feet
- II. Tunnels
- III. Cable-stayed bridges
- IV. Suspension bridges
- V. Movable bridges
- VI. Trusses with spans longer than 300 feet
- VII. Arch bridges
- VIII. Segmental bridges
- IX. Balance-cantilever bridges
- X. Other bridges requiring unique analytical methods or design features not commonly addressed in standards set forth by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

(3) Civil Engineering applicants who engage in the design of structural elements but will not perform Structural Engineering as defined in Paragraph (2), will be directed to take the eight-hour Civil Breadth and Structural Depth exam.

(c) Fundamentals of Land Surveying. Consists of a six-hour examination on the elementary disciplines of land surveying. Passing this examination qualifies the examinee for a land surveyor-in-training certificate provided he/she has met all other requirements for certification of this Chapter.

(d) Principles and Practice of Land Surveying and the Laws of Georgia. This examination tests the applicant's understanding of the theory and practice of land surveying. This examination may be taken after passage of the Fundamentals of Land Surveying Examination.

(e) Laws and History of Land Surveying in Georgia. This examination tests the applicant's knowledge and proficiency in the laws of Georgia which apply to land surveying as well as the history of the land division systems of Georgia.

(f) Hydrology. This examination is available to land surveyors who meet the requirements of OCGA 43-15-13.1 to become recognized as a Land Surveyor whose licensure is "Hydrology and Design Authorized". This examination tests the applicant's knowledge and proficiency in the engineering principles of hydrology, open channel flow, pressurized flows, sanitary sewer collection, and stormwater management.

(4) After administration of an examination, the contents of the examination will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed, except in such circumstances and under such conditions as may be approved by the Board. No reuse, copying or reproduction in any manner of any portion of the examination materials is permitted without the Board's permission.

(5) The Board will not conduct with examinees reviews of any portion of any examination. Further, the Board will not permit an examination to be re-scored.

(6) In case of an applicant seeking registration by comity under O.C.G.A. 43-15-16, the Board shall review the prior experience of the applicant in determining which exam is required for licensure in Georgia.

Rule 180-4-.01 Education

(a) The Board's approval or disapproval of the applicant's education as required under O.C.G.A. 43-15-12 or 43-15-13 will be made upon the applicant's submission of his/her application to the Board.

(b) Eighteen semester hours of land surveying course work must be earned at an accredited and recognized college or university acceptable to the board. The required eighteen hours shall not include necessary prerequisites that are required prior to said land surveying courses. Prerequisites at a minimum shall include a college level mathematics course (must include trigonometry) and a freshman level English and composition course.

Rule 180-4-.02 Experience

In evaluating experience offered by an applicant to qualify under OCGA §§ 43-15-13, the Board will consider the following factors:

(a) **Prior Education.** The applicant's prior education at the time the experience was acquired will be considered. Land surveying experience gained prior to completion of at least 9 hours of the required eighteen semester hours of land surveying course work shall be credited to the applicant at a maximum rate of 50% credit, and at the discretion of the board.

(b) **Kind of Experience.**

1. The experience should involve the special knowledge of the mathematical and physical sciences including those of the land surveying profession. It should also involve the preparation and interpretation of maps, plats, and other related data, as used in the land surveying profession.

2. A maximum of one year of experience equivalent may be granted for successful completion of undergraduate or graduate studies in a curriculum of land surveying, geomatics, civil engineering, civil engineering technology, or law, provided that any such education record to be applied as experience equivalent is in addition to the education used to meet the education requirement for OCGA §§ 43-15-13.

(c) **Quality of Experience.**

1. The quality of experience should demonstrate that the applicant has developed technical skills and initiative in the correct application of land surveying. The experience should also demonstrate sound judgment in the application of principles and in review of such applications of

principles by others. It should also indicate the capacity to assume responsibility for work of a highly technical character.

2. Experience credit will not be granted if the experience is determined by the Board to be the unlicensed practice of land surveying.

3. For experience evaluated in regard to OCGA § 43-15-13, "responsible charge" shall consist of working independently in a leadership and/or decision-making role where the applicant is directly responsible for progress of land surveying projects, provided however that all such experience shall be under the direct supervisory control on a daily basis by a professional land surveyor as required by OCGA § 43-15-22. Work in responsible charge reflects the applicant's ability to take land surveying projects from beginning to finished product and shall demonstrate the ability to competently complete all research prior to field work, competently perform a compliant field traverse that adequately identifies all applicable field evidence and elements of possession, properly analyze all field work through thorough calculations and evaluation, and prepare maps and plats that adequately depict all required elements of such maps and plats. A minimum of twenty-four months of the required experience shall be in the form of an apprenticeship. Said apprenticeship shall consist of work experience in responsible charge of land surveying projects under the direct supervision and tutelage of a professional land surveyor and will not be recognized as beginning until at least nine of the eighteen required semester hours of land surveying course work have been successfully completed. The board shall provide an endorsement form specifically for the supervising professional land surveyor regarding the apprenticeship of the applicant. The apprenticeship shall be strictly full-time work experience. The supervising registered land surveyor shall agree to focusing on the applicant's proficiency in a minimum of 3 prescribed skill sets and evaluate the applicant on such proficiency at the conclusion of the apprenticeship. The prescribed skill sets shall be boundary surveying, topographic surveying, and a third skill set to be chosen from GPS/GNSS surveying, Geographic Information Systems, construction layout, or photogrammetry (which may include LIDAR collection and laser scanning) or other skill sets acceptable to the Board. The supervising professional land surveyor must attest that in his or her opinion the applicant is competent to practice land surveying in the state of Georgia.

(d) **Scope.** The experience should demonstrate sufficient breadth and scope within the basic land surveying field rather than highly specialized technical skill in a very narrow and limited branch of that field.

(e) **Progression.** The record of work experience should indicate successive and continued progress from initial work of simple character to recent work of greater complexity, difficulty, and responsibility.

(f) **Capacity and Viewpoint.** The record of experience should indicate that the applicant has attained those attributes of clear thinking and keen analysis essential to competence.