

THE PATH TO COMPLIANCE

Continuing Education Update

The Board and its licensees have successfully completed several renewal cycles since mandatory continuing education requirements for engineers and land surveyors have been in place. Annual audits by Board appointed Continuing Education Committees have revealed that generally the goal of licensees maintaining an acceptable level of competency in the advancing professions of engineering and land surveying is succeeding. However, the audits have disclosed a few problem areas that need to be addressed.

One of the ongoing concerns and one of the most frequently asked questions this office receives is about what is or is not acceptable course content. Board rules state the coursework must be relevant to the practice of engineering or land surveying and must contain technical, ethical or managerial content. Furthermore, concerning the quality of the coursework, Board Rule 245: 15-11-6 (a)(1) states that "There is a clear purpose and objective for each activity, which will maintain, improve or expand skills and knowledge obtained prior to initial licensure or to develop new and relevant skills and knowledge." Whether a course or seminar meets that criteria was intentionally left to the integrity and professionalism of the individual licensee. Therefore, licensees should not consider enrolling in correspondence, internet or any other classes that offer entry level material in a field in which they are already proficient, or classes that cover obsolete technologies.

Another concern is the amount of PDH credit offered for particular coursework by some of the correspondence and internet providers. The Board has **not** pre-approved any providers, courses or the number of hours of credit for any course. PDH credit will be accepted only for the actual time for each program or the actual time it takes to complete a course. For example, if an on-line provider indicates that a licensee can earn 8 PDH's for a course, and it takes the licensee 1 hour to complete the course material, the Board expects the licensees to report 1 PDH for that course. According to Board Rule 245: 15-11-6 (b) "The Board has final authority with respect to acceptability of course, credit, PDH value for course and other methods of earning credit."

Another area of concern is incomplete Summary Logs of Professional Development Hours. Often licensees only list the provider of the courses on these log forms and not the titles of each specific course. That can become a problem if the provider offers course non related programs. For example, many of the state's technical societies offer luncheon meetings with programs that can be considered for continuing education credit. If the programs contain technical, managerial or ethical content, and meet the rest of the criteria set forth in the rules, they probably will qualify for PDH credit. However, if the technical society invites a panel to discuss OU football, that is not going to earn the recipients PDH credit. That is why it is important to list the title of the courses.

Even though this Board has disciplined licensees for violating continuing education rules, the vast majority of licensees are complying with the Board rules and the vast majority of continuing education providers are honest and are supplying engineers and land surveyors with worthwhile course material that does assist the licensee maintain competency. This Board will continue to monitor continuing education classes and offer assistance to its licensees in this area as appropriate.



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