

# Pennsylvania Land Surveying Examination

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN

March 2023



# QUICK REFERENCE

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## PENNSYLVANIA STATE REGISTRATION BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS AND GEOLOGISTS

<http://www.dos.pa.gov/eng>

P.O. Box 2649

Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

(717) 783-7049

*Hours of Operation 8:30 am – 5:00 pm M-F, Closed on State and Federal Holidays*

### **Contact the Board to:**

- Clarify information about licensure
- Change your current name **or address**
- Obtain license verification

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## PEARSON VUE® PENNSYLVANIA STATE LAND SURVEYING EXAMINATION

<http://www.pearsonvue.com>

*Attn: Regulatory Program Manager*

5601 Green Valley Dr.

Bloomington, MN 55437

(877) 883-1370

*Monday–Friday 8am–11pm; Saturday 8am–5pm; Sunday 10am–4pm (Eastern Time Zone)*

### **Go to Pearson VUE's website (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/pa/bpoa>) to:**

- Download a candidate handbook
- Schedule, cancel, or reschedule an examination

### **Accommodation Requests (<http://pearsonvue.com/accommodations>):**

- Request an accommodation for testing under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Quick Reference .....	inside front cover	The Exam.....	5
Introduction .....	1	Content Outline .....	5
Eligibility and Application Process .....	1	Score Reporting .....	6
Eligibility Requirements for the Pennsylvania State Land Surveying Examination.....	1	Scaled Score.....	6
Demographic Changes .....	2	Passing.....	6
Application Fee .....	2	Failing and Retaking an Examination .....	6
Criminal History Record Check (mandatory):.....	2	Duplicate Score Report.....	6
Approval to Test Notice.....	2		
Exam Scheduling, Cancellation, and Rescheduling.....	2		
Exam Fee.....	2		
Cancellation and Rescheduling Policy.....	2		
Absence Policy .....	2		
Weather Emergencies.....	3		
ADA Accommodations.....	3		
Exam Day.....	3		
What to Bring.....	3		
Reference Material Guidelines .....	4		
Acceptable Forms of Candidate Identification .....	4		
Testing Policies .....	4		
Lateness .....	4		
Electronic Devices.....	4		
Personal Belongings/Study Aids.....	4		
Eating/Drinking/Smoking.....	4		
Misconduct .....	4		
Guests/Visitors.....	4		

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## APPENDIX

A: Request for Duplicate Score Report Form.....	back of handbook
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## General Information.....

Test Sites.....	back of handbook
Examination and Fees .....	back of handbook



# INTRODUCTION

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The Pennsylvania Department of State has contracted with Pearson VUE to administer the Pennsylvania State Specific Land Surveyor examination (PLS). The focus of this handbook is to describe the steps that you, the candidate must follow to apply for and test.

## ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCESS

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You must submit a completed *Application for Examination* with supporting documentation and fees prior to being approved to sit for an examination. Applications must be submitted electronically to the Pennsylvania Department of State via the Pennsylvania Licensing System (PALS - <https://www.pals.pa.gov>).

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE LAND SURVEYING EXAMINATION

In order to be eligible to take the Pennsylvania State Specific Land Surveyor examination (PLS) or if you are already a licensed Professional Land Surveyor in another state, you must meet the following education and experience requirements.

- Shall achieve a passing score on the NCEES Fundamentals of Land Surveying examination (there is **NO EXCEPTION** to this requirement) and be certified as a surveyor in training
- Or if already licensed in another state, you must hold an unexpired license or certificate of registration issued by proper authority of another state, foreign country or territory of the United States in which the requirements and qualifications to engage in the practice of Land Surveying were at the time of initial issuance of such license or certificate of registration at least equal to the existing standards of this Commonwealth: have successfully completed the NCEES Fundamentals of Surveying examination and the Principles and Practices of land surveying (there is **NO EXCEPTION** to this requirement).
- Successful completion of the State Specific Land Surveyor examination, this is a **mandatory** requirement.

Or

- Four or more years of progressive experience in land surveying work performed **after the issuance of the surveyor-in-training certificate** and under the supervision of a professional land surveyor or a similarly qualified surveyor of a grade or character to fit him to assume responsible charge of the work involved in the practice of land surveying;

To apply for approval to sit for the NCEES Principles and Practice of Land Surveying and the PA State Specific exams, it is necessary to have:

- Four or more years of progressive teaching experience in an approved curriculum under the supervision of a professional land surveyor or a similarly qualified surveyor of a grade and character to fit him to assume responsible charge of the work involved in the practice of land surveying.
- An Applicant shall show diversification of field and office experience, with at least twenty-five percent of his experience in each.
- Must provide five (5) references, 3 of whom shall be licensed professional land surveyors in this Commonwealth or another state or territory of the United States. Individuals used as references shall be qualified to evaluate the applicant's training and experience and know the applicant personally, but may not be related to the applicant. Individuals used as references shall include professional land surveyors or professional engineers under whose direct supervision the applicant has worked.

- Amplified record of work experience form must be fully completed according to the instructions on the form and a detailed breakdown of surveying experience form.
- Verification or Examination/Registration of successful completion of the NCEES Fundamentals of Land Surveying and the Principles and Practices of Land Surveying if completed in another state or territory.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Candidates must contact the Pennsylvania State Board of Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists at (717) 783-7049 regarding demographic changes, including name, address, or email changes.

## APPLICATION FEE

Along with your application and required documents, all applicants must pay the \$50.00 application fee via PALS.

Application fees through PALS are only acceptable via credit and debit. Candidates that do not possess a credit or debit should contact the Board.

## CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK (MANDATORY):

Pennsylvania applicants must either provide or purchase a recent *Criminal History Records Check* (CHRC) from the Pennsylvania State Police or another state agency from every state in which the applicant has lived or worked within the past five (5) years. The report(s) must be dated within 180 days of the date the application was submitted.

For new license applicants, who reside in Pennsylvania, a \$22 fee will be added to your application. This will be run by the Dept of State.

This will result in your PA CHRC automatically being requested and delivered directly to the Board.

For applicants residing in California, Arizona, or Ohio: Due to the laws of these states, the Board is not an eligible recipient of CHRC's from California, Ohio, or Arizona. Please obtain your Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Identity History Summary Check at <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/identity-historysummary-checks>.

## APPROVAL TO TEST NOTICE

When your *Application for Examination*, application fee, transcripts, and other documents have been received and evaluated for eligibility, you will receive an approval to test notice via email. The approval to test notice contains details about how to schedule your examination.

An approval to test notice will not be sent until a completed application and all of the requested items have been received, verified, and approved by the board office.

# EXAM SCHEDULING, CANCELLATION, AND RESCHEDULING

The Exam will be given at a Pearson VUE computer-based testing facility. Once you have received your approval to test notice, please schedule your test online by using the Pearson VUE web reservations site at: <http://www.pearsonvue.com/pa/surveyors/>.

## EXAM FEE

The exam fee (\$200) can be paid by credit card, or debit card. Personal checks are not accepted. Exam fees are paid online at [www.pearsonvue.com](http://www.pearsonvue.com) at the conclusion of the exam scheduling process.

## CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING POLICY

If you cannot attend your Exam, you must contact Pearson VUE at least forty-eight (48) hours before the day of the exam to reschedule. If you do not attend your exam, and have not contacted Pearson VUE at least forty-eight (48) hours before the exam date, your exam fee will **NOT** be refunded and you cannot transfer the fee to another exam date. You may not give your exam date to another person.

## ABSENCE POLICY

Candidates who are late or absent from an exam may call Pearson VUE within 14 days of the exam date to request an excused absence. A case number will be assigned, and supporting documentation can be emailed to [Caseattachments@pearson.com](mailto:Caseattachments@pearson.com). For example, if you are absent because of illness of yourself or an immediate family member, you must email a copy of the original doctor's note to [Caseattachments@pearson.com](mailto:Caseattachments@pearson.com).

Acceptable excuses include:

- Illness of yourself or an immediate family member
- Death in the family
- Disabling traffic accident
- Court appearance or jury duty
- Military duty
- Weather emergency

## WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Exams may be delayed or cancelled if severe weather or a natural disaster makes the test site unsafe or impossible to reach. Candidates will be notified if the exam is cancelled and may take the exam on another day at no additional cost.

## ADA ACCOMMODATIONS

Pearson VUE complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended. The purpose of accommodations is to provide candidates with full access to the test. Accommodations are not a guarantee of improved performance or test completion. Pearson VUE provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations.

Test accommodations may include things such as:

- A separate testing room
- Extra testing time
- Large print test booklet

Test accommodations are individualized and considered on a case-by-case basis. All candidates who are requesting accommodations because of a disability must provide appropriate documentation of their condition and how it is expected to affect their ability to take the test under standard conditions. This may include:

- Supporting documentation from the professional who diagnosed the condition, including the credentials that qualify the professional to make this diagnosis
- A description of past accommodations the candidate has received

The steps to follow when requesting test accommodations vary, depending on your test program sponsor. To begin, go to <http://pearsonvue.com/accommodations>, and then select your test program sponsor from the alphabetized list. Candidates who have additional questions concerning test accommodations may contact the ADA Coordinator by emailing [accommodationspearsonvue@pearson.com](mailto:accommodationspearsonvue@pearson.com).

**All accommodation requests MUST be submitted before the scheduling window closes.**

## EXAM DAY

Please arrive at the test center thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled appointment time. This will give you adequate time to complete the necessary sign-in procedures. Be prepared to show identification. If you arrive late to the exam, you will be refused admission and exam fees will be forfeited.

## WHAT TO BRING

**REQUIRED: Two (2)** forms of current (unexpired) signature-bearing identification, one of which **MUST** be photo-bearing. Please refer to the *Acceptable Forms of Candidate Identification* section below for additional information.

**OPTIONAL:** The Pennsylvania State Land Surveying Examination is open book and reference materials may be brought to the test center provided they meet the requirements identified in the *Reference Materials* section on the next page.

**PROHIBITED:** Personal items, including calculators are not permitted in the testing room. Please note that the exam is embedded with a TI-30XS scientific calculator. Please refer to the *Testing Policies* section on the next page for additional details.





## REFERENCE MATERIAL GUIDELINES

Reference materials must be bound and remain bound during the exam.

Bound refers to materials permanently bound, as by stitching or glue, and materials securely fastened in their covers by fasteners that penetrate all papers. Loose paper may be bound with ring binders, brads, plastic snap binders, spiral bound notebooks, and screw posts, but not with staples. Writing tablets and legal pads are not allowed.

You may tab reference books before the exam with sticky notes and flags, but pads of sticky notes and flags are not permitted in the exam room. You may not write in any of the reference materials during the examination.

Materials that do not meet these guidelines will not be permitted inside the testing room.

## ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION

Candidates must present **two (2) forms** of current signature identification that conform with the rules below:

- The primary identification must be government-issued and photo-bearing with a signature
- The secondary identification must contain a valid signature
- Both forms of identification must be in English
- The signature and names must match exactly to what was submitted on your application

If you come to the test site without the proper ID, you will not be allowed to take the exam and you will lose your exam fee.

Note: Candidates are not permitted to enlist another individual (proxy) to test on their behalf.

### Primary ID (photograph and signature, not expired)

- Government-issued Driver's License
- U.S. Dept. of State Driver's License
- U.S. Learner's Permit (plastic card only with photo and signature)
- National/State/Country ID card
- Passport
- Passport Card
- Military ID
- Military ID for spouses and dependents
- Alien Registration Card (Green Card, Permanent Resident Visa)

### Secondary ID (signature, not expired)

- U.S. Social Security card
- Debit (ATM) card

- Any form of ID on the Primary ID list

If the ID presented has an embedded signature that is not visible (microchip), or is difficult or impossible to read, the candidate must present another form of identification from the Primary ID or Secondary ID list that contains a visible signature.

Pearson VUE does not recognize grace periods. For example, if a candidate's driver's license expired yesterday and the state allows a 30-day grace period for renewing the ID, the ID is considered to be expired.

## TESTING POLICIES

The following policies are observed at each test center:

### LATENESS

Please arrive at the test center thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled examination starts. If you are late for your scheduled examination, you may be denied entry and your examination fee may be forfeited (see *Cancellation and Rescheduling* for more details).

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cellular phones, calculators, pagers or any other electronic devices are not permitted to be used and must be turned off during testing. A TI-30XS scientific calculator is embedded into the exam.

### PERSONAL BELONGINGS/STUDY AIDS

Except as outlined above under *What to Bring: Optional*, you are not permitted to take personal belongings such as briefcases, large bags, study materials, extra books or papers into the examination room. Any such materials brought into the examination room will be collected and returned to you when you have completed the examination.

### EATING/DRINKING/SMOKING

You are not permitted to eat, drink, or smoke during the examination.

### MISCONDUCT

If you cause a disturbance of any kind or engage in any kind of misconduct, you will be dismissed from the examination and the incident will be reported to the Pennsylvania State Board of Auctioneer Examiners. Decisions regarding disciplinary measures are the responsibility of the Pennsylvania State Registration Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists.

### GUESTS/VISITORS

Guests, visitors, pets, interpreters, or children are not allowed at the test centers.



# THE EXAM

The Pennsylvania State Land Surveying Examination will consist of 30 scored and 5 “pretest” multiple choice questions. (Pretest questions are questions on which information is being collected for use in making future exams. Your answers to pretest questions do not affect your score. Pretest questions are mixed in with the scored questions and are not identified.) You will have 120 minutes to complete the exam, which will begin after you have accepted the terms of the Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Each examination item will consist of a question and four answer options. If you do not know the answer, you may guess or move on to the next item. However, please note that unanswered questions will be marked as incorrect. If you want to review a specific question after completing the test, you can click on "Flag for Review" to mark the question. If you click on "Flag for Review," the flag will display in yellow. At the end of the test, you may have time to review questions that you marked. Questions flagged for review will appear with a blue flag in the Review Screen. You may then go back to the flagged questions and answer them or change your response.

Pearson VUE highly encourages all test takers to review the online tutorial (<http://www.pearsonvue.com/demo>) before arriving to the test center. The tutorial will help familiarize yourself with the look, feel and navigation of a Pearson VUE computer-based test.

If you give help to someone or receive help from anyone during the exam, you will be asked to leave the room immediately. The results will not be scored and the incident will be reported to the Pennsylvania State Registration Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists. Anyone who takes or tries to take materials or information from the testing room is subject to prosecution.

All exam questions, each form of the exam, and all other exam materials are copyrighted by and the property of Pearson VUE. Any distribution of the exam content or materials through any form of reproduction, or through oral or written communication, is strictly prohibited and punishable by law. Anyone who removes or tries to remove exam material or information from the test site will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

# CONTENT OUTLINE

## CONTENT OUTLINE — LAND SURVEYING

35 total items  
(30 scored and 5 “pretest” multiple choice questions)

### I. Pennsylvania Professional Practice

- A. Registration Law – Act 367, as amended
- B. Professional Standards
- C. Professional Ethics
- D. Statute of Limitations/Statute of Repose
- E. State Plane Coordinates

### II. Unique Pennsylvania Legal Aspects

- A. Record Research
- B. Retracement Surveys
- C. Senior Rights – Sequential Conveyances in a Subdivision
- D. Rights-of-Way
- E. Easements
- F. Riparian Rights
- G. Writing Boundary Descriptions
- H. Municipal Planning Code (Act 247)
  - I. Condominiums
  - J. Other Statutes

### III. Minor Engineering/Land Development Design

- A. Stormwater Runoff/Hydrology
  - i. Rational Method
  - ii. SCS I TR-55
- B. Stormwater Management Systems
  - i. Hydraulics – pipes/swales
  - ii. Detention Facilities
- C. Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control
- D. Roadway Design
- E. Sanitary Sewer Extensions
- F. On-Site Sewage Facilities
- G. Permits
  - i. Penn Dot highway occupancy
  - ii. DEP – stream encroachments, planning modules, sewer extensions, erosion and sediment pollution control, wetlands, etc.
  - iii. SCS
- H. Utilities

# SCORE REPORTING

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At the conclusion of the examination, **preliminary** exam results will be provided. Your official license will verify passage of the exam and confirm the preliminary report.

## SCALED SCORE

The passing scores of the licensing examinations were set by the Pennsylvania State Registration Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists (in conjunction with Pearson VUE) after a comprehensive study was completed for each examination. Raw scores are converted into scaled scores that can range from 0 to 100. To avoid misuse of score information, numeric scores are only reported to failing candidates. The scaled score that is reported to you is neither the number of questions you answered correctly nor the percentage of questions you answered correctly. With a passing score of 75, any score below 75 indicates how close the candidate came to passing, rather than the actual number or percentage of questions the candidates answered correctly.

## PASSING

After you have successfully passed the examination and upon satisfactory evidence that you have met all statutory requirements, your license will be issued. Please allow approximately 30 days for the Board office to process your license.

To verify whether or not a license has been issued, an applicant may search the State's web site using the following link: <http://www.licensepa.gov>.

## FAILING AND RETAKING AN EXAMINATION

To schedule a retake examination, use the web reservations on the Pearson VUE web site at <http://www.pearsonvue.com/pa/bpoa>. Reservations for reexamination cannot be made at the test center, and **you must wait twenty-four (24) hours from your failed examination before making your reservation.**

## DUPLICATE SCORE REPORT

If you lose your Score Report or need a duplicate Score Report, complete the *Request for Duplicate Score Report Form* and mail it to Pearson VUE (see *Appendix A*).

**DIRECTIONS:** You may use this form to ask Pearson VUE for a copy of your Examination Score Report. Please print or type all information on this form, or your request will be returned.

**SEND TO:** Pearson VUE/Pennsylvania Land Surveyor Program  
Duplicate Score Request  
5601 Green Valley Drive  
Bloomington, MN 55437

or email the request to:  
**pearsonvuecustomerservice@pearson.com**

**Please complete the following form with your current name and address. All information must be complete and accurate to ensure proper processing.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Exam \_\_\_\_\_ Exam Date \_\_\_\_\_

**If the above information was different at the time you were tested, please indicate original information. If your name has changed, you must attach a copy of a legal document authorizing the change (for example, a marriage certificate or a divorce decree).**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby authorize Pearson VUE to send me at the address above a duplicate of my score report.**

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## TEST SITES

The Exam will be given at a Pearson VUE computer-based testing facility. Once you have received your *Authorization to Test* notice, please schedule your test online by using the Pearson VUE web reservations site at: <http://www.pearsonvue.com/pa/surveyors/>.

Below is list of some of the cities in which you can test. However, candidates may test at any of our US test centers.

TESTING SITE LOCATION	
Location	City
Pearson Professional Centers – Allentown, PA	Allentown
Pearson Professional Centers – Blue Bell, PA	Blue Bell
Pearson Professional Centers – Erie, PA	Erie
Pearson Professional Centers – Harrisburg, PA	Harrisburg
Pearson Professional Centers – King of Prussia, PA	King of Prussia
Pearson Professional Centers – Lancaster, PA	Lancaster
Pearson Professional Centers – Philadelphia, PA	Philadelphia
Pearson Professional Centers – Pittsburgh (East), PA	Pittsburgh
Pearson Professional Centers – Pittsburgh (West), PA	Pittsburgh
Pearson Professional Centers – Scranton, PA	Scranton
Pearson Professional Centers – Warrington, PA	Warrington
Pearson Professional Centers – Washington, PA	Washington

## EXAMINATION AND FEE

EXAMINATION	TOTAL ITEMS	SCORED ITEMS	PRE-TEST ITEMS	EXAM TIME ALLOTTED	FEE
The Pennsylvania State Land Surveying Examination	35	30	5	120 minutes	\$200

## PEARSON VUE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

No exams on the following holidays or holiday weekends:

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Labor Day

Christmas Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Independence Day

Thanksgiving