



Pennsylvania Geologist (FG and PG exams)

Candidate Information Bulletin

October 2021

QUICK REFERENCE

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

www.dos.pa.gov/eng

P.O. Box 2649

Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

(717) 783-7049

Email: ST-ENGINEER@PA.GOV

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

Contact the Board to:

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

PEARSON VUE® PENNSYLVANIA GEOLOGY EXAMINATION

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 (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

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF GEOLOGY

www.asbog.org

Visit ASBOG® (www.asbog.org) to:

- Obtain information regarding the exam content
- View the examination blueprints
- Obtain the examination schedule
- Download the ASBOG® Candidate Handbook (for exam scoring information and exam day procedures)

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INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania Department of State has contracted with Pearson VUE to administer both the Fundamentals of Geology (FG) and the Principles and Practices of Geology (PG) examinations. Both exams are owned, developed, and scored by the National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG®).

The focus of this handbook is to describe the steps that you, the candidate must follow to apply for and test. Please be sure to also review ASBOG®'s candidate handbook (www.asbog.org), which describes the content of each exam as well scoring methodologies and other pertinent information.

ASBOG® EXAMINATION INFORMATION

The written examination given by the Pennsylvania Board is developed by the National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG®) and consists of two 4-hour sections; a Fundamentals of Geology (FG) exam and a Principles and Practice of Geology (PG) exam. Both examinations are "closed-book" and are administered on a single day during the spring and fall of each year. For each exam, the score is determined using a criterion-referenced approach. Passing scores are adjusted (scaled) based on the average difficulty level on each exam. Passing scores always reflect minimum competency. For each exam, a scaled score of 70 is the minimum passing score.

For additional information on the examination, please access the following web site: www.asbog.org

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCESS

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 - www.pals.pa.gov).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ASBOG® FUNDAMENTALS OF GEOLOGY EXAMINATION

In order to be eligible to take the Fundamentals of Geology (FG) Exam, applicants must meet one of the following set of requirements:

Graduation from an accredited institution of higher learning in the United States, having majored in geology, geophysics, geochemistry, or engineering geology and having completed 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours in the major.

A student who has completed 2 years in a program and has maintained current enrollment may, with Board approval, sit for the Fundamentals of Geology examination, but will not be eligible for certification as a geologist-in-training until the student provides proof of graduation, including compliance with the educational content requirements to include field geology and structural geology coursework that is sufficient to demonstrate that the candidate has educational experience in tectonics and fractured bedrock geology and the field methods needed to measure, map and evaluate geologic data. The effective date of certification will be the later of the date of graduation or the date of notification from ASBOG® of achieving a passing score on the Fundamentals of Geology examination.

OR

Graduation from an accredited institution of higher learning in the United States that does not offer a major in geology, geophysics, geochemistry or engineering geology, having completed 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours or an equivalent amount of geological education, including 24 semester hours or an equivalent amount in third-year or fourth-year courses or graduate courses.

A student who has completed 2 years in a program and has maintained current enrollment may, with Board approval, sit for the fundamentals of geology examination, but will not be eligible for certification as an geologist-in-training until the student provides

proof of graduation, including compliance with the educational content requirements to include field geology and structural geology coursework that is sufficient to demonstrate that the candidate has educational experience in tectonics and fractured bedrock geology and the field methods needed to measure, map and evaluate geologic data. The effective date of certification will be the later of the date of graduation or the date of notification from ASBOG® of achieving a passing score on the Fundamentals of Geology examination.

EDUCATION VERIFICATION (FG EXAM)

Education must be verified with an original transcript received directly from your school showing completion of all geology related degrees and courses and the date your degree was conferred. If you have both an undergraduate and graduate degree, an original transcript must be submitted for both. The college/university must send official, final transcripts directly to the Board office.

If you are applying as a student, you must have your registrar submit a completed Report of Student Status form directly to the Board office.

Foreign Graduates

If you are a graduate from a school outside the United States, your educational credentials must be evaluated to determine the equivalency of your degree to a degree from an accredited U.S. school. A course-by-course evaluation must be submitted directly to the Board office. Contact: World Education Services, P.O. Box 745, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011, OR Educational Credential Evaluators, P.O. Box 92970, Milwaukee, WI 53202 OR any professional evaluation service.

All Graduates

If your school did **NOT**, at the time you graduated, grant semester or quarter hours in geological science courses leading to a major in geology, your school must provide you a letter confirming same. The school must submit this letter directly to the Board office.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ASBOG® PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF GEOLOGY EXAMINATION

In order to be eligible to take the Principles and Practices of Geology (PG) Exam, applicants must meet one of the following set of requirements:

Graduation from an accredited institution with a major in geology, geophysics, geochemistry or engineering geology, with a minimum of 30 semester or 45 quarter hours in geology, geophysics, geochemistry, engineering geology or their subdivisions;

OR

Completion of 30 semester or 45 quarter hours or an equivalent amount of geological education from institutions which do not grant semester or quarter hours in geological science courses leading to a major in geology, of which at least 24 semester hours or an equivalent amount are in third or fourth year undergraduate courses or graduate courses.

EDUCATION VERIFICATION (PG EXAM)

Education must be verified with an original transcript from your school showing completion of all geology related degrees and courses and the date your degree was conferred. If you have both an undergraduate and graduate degree, an original transcript must be submitted for both. The college/university must mail the transcript directly to the board office.

Foreign Graduates

If you are a graduate from a school outside the United States, your educational credentials must be evaluated to determine the equivalency of your degree to a degree from an accredited U.S. school. A course-by-course evaluation must be submitted directly to the Board office. Contact: World Education Services, P.O. Box 745, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011, OR Educational Credential Evaluators, P.O. Box 92970, Milwaukee, WI 53202, OR any professional evaluation service.

All Graduates

If your school did **NOT**, at the time you graduated, grant semester or quarter hours in geological science courses leading to a major in geology, your school must provide you a letter confirming same. The school must submit this letter directly to the Board office.

Completion of at least 5 years of professional geological work, which shall include either a minimum of 3 years of professional geological work under the supervision of a licensed professional geologist or a minimum of 5 years in a responsible position in professional geological work. Professional geological work performed prior to February 16, 1993 will be considered if it was performed under the supervision of either a licensed professional geologist or a qualified geologist who was not licensed.

NOTE: "Professional geological work" is defined as the performance of geological service of work, including technical completeness reviews or inspections of unfinalized work product that requires utilization, application and interpretation of fundamental and practical principles of the geological sciences in the practice of geology. The term does not include routine sampling, laboratory work or geological drafting.

Acceptable experience includes work as a graduate teaching/research assistant or employment as a professor.

Graduate study (in proper field) **MAY** be credited as professional geological work at one year for a Master's Degree and 1 year for a Doctor's Degree, not exceeding two years. Experience credit is not given if no graduate degree has been received or if the graduate degree is not preceded by a bachelor's degree with a "major" as described above.

REFERENCES (PG EXAM)

References should have personal knowledge of your experience and collectively be able to attest to the entire amount of required experience.

An applicant is encouraged to use an immediate supervisor (as long as they are a licensed professional geologist) as a reference.

Applicants must provide five (5) references, 3 of whom should be licensed professional geologists and can not be related to the applicant, the remaining two (2) references should be professional engineers, professional land surveyors or unlicensed geologists who, through education and experience, possess an equivalent level of expertise as that of a professional geologist. **It is permitted for these last two references to be related to the applicant.** In the case of work performed prior to February 16, 1993, a similarly qualified geologist who was not licensed (with the proper biography) may be submitted.

Each reference must complete a reference information form and forward directly to the Board office.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The Board application and all supporting documents must be **POSTMARKED** by the deadline indicated below to be considered complete:

- November 15 for March Exams
- June 15 for October Exams

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 at www.pals.pa.gov 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 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 90 days of the date the application was submitted.

For new license applicants, who reside in Pennsylvania, a \$27 cost will be added for your PA CHRC. This will be run by the Dept of State.

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-history-summary-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

Once you have received your approval to test notice, please schedule your test online by using the Pearson VUE web reservations site at: www.pearsonvue.com/pa/geologists/.

Both the FG and PG exams are offered twice per year in Harrisburg on dates chosen by ASBOG®. Exams may only be scheduled, rescheduled, or cancelled up to 30 days prior to the exam date:

Exam Date	Last Day to Schedule/Cancel
March 18, 2022	January 21, 2022
October 7, 2022	August 9, 2022

Please refer to www.asbog.org for a complete schedule of upcoming examination dates.

IMPORTANT: Please note that the FG and PG exams are given at specific times identified by ASBOG.

Please arrive at the test center thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled appointment.

FG Exam: Appointments must be scheduled for 7:45 AM. This is when instructions are given. The exam will begin at exactly 8:00 AM. As per ASBOG policies, candidates who arrive after 8:00 AM will **NOT** be admitted and will forfeit their exam fees.

PG Exam: Appointments must be scheduled for 12:45 PM. This is when instructions are given. The exam will begin at exactly 1:00 PM. As per ASBOG policies, candidates who arrive after 1:00 PM will **NOT** be admitted and will forfeit their exam fees.

Pearson VUE reserves the right to reschedule candidates who are not scheduled for the correct time.

CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING POLICY

If you cannot attend your scheduled appointment, you must contact Pearson VUE at least 30 days before the exam date (as shown in the table above). There are no fees for cancelling or rescheduling an appointment as long as the changes are made at least 30 days prior to the exam date.

If you do not attend your exam or have not contacted Pearson VUE by the Last Day to Schedule/Cancel, 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.

EXAM FEE

Exam fee (\$175) can be paid by credit card, debit card, or electronic check (payable to Pearson VUE). Personal checks are not accepted. Exam fees are paid online at www.pearsonvue.com at the conclusion of the exam scheduling process.

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. 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.

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 www.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 accommodations@pearsonvue.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. Examinations will begin promptly at 8:00 AM (for FG Exam) or 1:00 PM (for PG Exam). 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

Please read this section carefully. Candidates who do not present the required items will be denied admission to the examination and will forfeit the examination fee. **No personal items may be taken into the testing room.**

REQUIRED ITEMS

All candidates are required to bring:

- At least two forms of identification that is deemed acceptable, as listed under the "Acceptable Forms of Candidate Identification" section below.
- A **printed copy** of your exam confirmation email that you received after making your appointment.

ACCEPTABLE ITEMS IN TESTING ROOM

Allowed on Desktop during Exam

- test book and answer sheet
- Identification
- earplugs
- ASBOG Mechanical pencils will be distributed prior to the exam.
- analog (non-digital) wristwatch
- Approved portable (battery-operated or solar powered), silent non-printing, non-alpha programmable calculator.
- Protractor, straight edge and engineer's scale
- Small snacks (e.g., hard candies, candy bars,)
- Graph paper and blank scratch pages will be provided at the back of the examination booklet and may be torn out, if necessary, to be used as work papers.

NOTE: Thumbtacks, cardboard, Meridian Stereographic Nets and tracing paper are not necessary.

Acceptable Items to be placed under the candidate's seat.

It is suggested you bring a One-Gallon Plastic Bag to place your acceptable items in for storage under your seat.

- tissues
- wallet
- keys
- medication/glucose tabs or gel
- hygiene products
- cough drops or hard candy
- non-alcoholic beverage in a plastic container or juice box (maximum size: 20 oz/591 ml)—no aluminum cans or glass containers are permitted.
- Additional snacks

Beverages are **NOT** permitted on the desktop and may be accessed only during a break.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Possession of any of the following during the examination is prohibited:

- Calculators, or any other wireless electronic devices, that have email/Internet/text messaging capability shall **NOT** be allowed.
- Electronic devices of any kind:
 - cell phones, smart phones, text messaging devices, personal digital assistants, or other electronic communication devices
 - smart watches of any kind (digital watches, alarm watches, beeping watches, calculator watches)
 - Fitness tracking devices of any kind
 - E-readers, iPads, tablets, laptops, iPods, radios, listening devices, other media players
 - cameras, scanners, audio/video recording devices, or any picture-taking devices
 - any electronic device that has email/internet/text message capabilities
 - scanning pens
- alpha programmable calculators
- headphones or headsets
- language translators
- alarms
- electronic timers of any kind
- written materials, including books, notes, dictionaries, papers of any kind

- scratch paper or paper of any kind
- personal mechanical pencils/erasers
- pens or wooden pencils
- highlighters
- electronic cigarettes
- ink pens or felt-tip markers
- briefcases, handbags, backpacks of any kind
- hats/hoods (except religious apparel) may not be worn on the head
- sunglasses may not be worn
- weapons or firearms

Violation of any of the prohibitions listed on this page will result in immediate expulsion from the examination site and forfeiture of examination privileges (examination will not be scored) and fees.

It is the candidate's responsibility to turn in any of these items to the Proctor before the start of the examination. The prohibited items **MUST** be kept in the candidates vehicle, they are not permitted into the testing location.

There is a no-tolerance policy with regard to the use or possession of electronic devices, including cell phones, any type of transmitting device or in possession of a weapon or firearm.

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.

Name Matching Guidelines

If the name on your ID does not *exactly* match the name on your application in PALS, you must inform the Board at least two weeks prior to the examination or else you may not be permitted to sit for the exam and you will forfeit your exam fee. This policy includes first name variations (e.g., Chris/Christopher, Sandy/Sandra), maiden names, and typos.

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, developed in conjunction with the Board and ASBOG[®], will be strictly enforced:

LATENESS

If you are late for your scheduled examination, you will **NOT** be allowed to test and your examination fee will **NOT** be returned (see *Cancellation and Rescheduling* for more details).

EATING/DRINKING/SMOKING

You are not permitted to eat, drink, or smoke during the examination; however you will be permitted to have capped beverages (no cans or glass) and are allowed quiet things to chew on, no gum.

MISCONDUCT

If you cause a disturbance of any kind or engage in any kind of misconduct, you will be reported to the Board and ASBOG[®]. Decisions regarding disciplinary measures are the responsibility of the Board.

GUESTS/VISITORS

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

EXAMINATIONS AND SCHEDULES

Once you have received your *Approval to Test Notice*, please schedule your test online by using the Pearson VUE web reservations site at: www.pearsonvue.com/pa/geologists/.

Both the FG and PG exams are offered twice per year in Harrisburg on dates chosen by ASBOG®. Exams may only be scheduled, rescheduled, or cancelled up to 30 days prior to the exam date.

Examination	Total Items	Upcoming Biannual Exam Dates	Exam Time Schedules	Exam Time Allotted
Fundamentals of Geology (FG) exam	140	March 18, 2022	8:00 AM to 12:00 PM	4 hours
		October 7, 2022		
Principles and Practice of Geology (PG) exam	110	March 18, 2022	1:00 PM to 5:00 PM	4 hours
		October 7, 2022		

Please refer to www.asbog.org for a complete schedule of upcoming examination dates.