

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 702

(Delegate Vaughn, *et al.*)

Economic Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Professional Land Surveyors - Licensure Qualifications - Revisions

This bill alters the requirements for licensure as a professional land surveyor. Generally, new education and experience requirements are phased in over time. Of the four available pathways to licensure, one academic pathway is no longer available after December 31, 2023, and one nonacademic pathway is no longer available after December 31, 2025.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources. The bill does not affect revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful; some applicants only need four, rather than eight, years of experience to immediately qualify for licensure under the “nonacademic” option. Under the “academic” options, additional years of experience are required beginning October 1, 2017. Ultimately, all applicants will need 32 credit hours of land surveying-related courses (requirement phases in on October 1, 2023).

Analysis

Bill Summary: Due to the phase in of additional requirements, beginning January 1, 2026, *any* applicant for licensure must possess a minimum of 32 credit hours of land surveying that the State Board for Professional Land Surveyors approves. Two years of additional experience requirements for certain applicants are phased in by October 1, 2017, whereas four fewer years of experience are required for certain other

applicants. Until the phase out of two pathways, an applicant for licensure continues to qualify through one of the four pathways for several years as described below.

Option One: The applicant (1) has graduated on completion of at least a four-year curriculum from an accredited college or university and, beginning October 1, 2023, possesses a minimum of 32 credit hours of land surveying-related courses that the board approves; (2) *on or before September 30, 2017*, has at least *two* years of satisfactory experience in land surveying, but *beginning October 1, 2017*, has at least *four* years of satisfactory experience in land surveying; (3) has passed the examination in the fundamentals of surveying; and (4) has passed the examination in the principles and practice of surveying and, unless excused by the board, State-specific examination modules.

Option Two (Terminates December 31, 2023): The applicant (1) has graduated on completion of at least a four-year curriculum from an accredited college or university; (2) *on or before September 30, 2017*, has at least *four* years of satisfactory experience in land surveying, but beginning *October 1, 2017*, has at least *six* years of satisfactory experience in land surveying; (3) has passed the examination in the fundamentals of surveying; and (4) has passed the examination in the principles and practice of surveying and, unless excused by the board, State-specific examination modules.

Option Three (Terminates December 31, 2025): The applicant (1) is a high school graduate or the equivalent; (2) has at least 12 years of satisfactory experience in land surveying; and (3) has passed the examination in the principles and practice of surveying and, unless excused by the board, State-specific examination modules.

Option Four: The applicant (1) is a high school graduate or the equivalent and, *beginning October 1, 2023*, possesses a minimum of 32 credit hours of land surveying-related courses that the board approves; (2) has at least four years of satisfactory experience in land surveying; (3) has passed the examination in the fundamentals of surveying; and (4) has passed the examination in the principles and practice of surveying and, unless excused by the board, State-specific examination modules.

The board is further authorized to waive any *part* of an examination requirement for an individual who is licensed to practice professional land surveying in another state, but the board may require the individual to pass the State-specific exam and any part of a nationally administered exam that the applicant has previously failed.

Finally, the board is authorized to allow credit toward experience requirements for land surveying-*related* courses that the board approves (as opposed to solely land surveying courses, under current law).

Current Law: As shown in **Exhibit 1**, current law allows four different pathways to licensure for professional land surveyors, involving different levels of experience, education, and examination. Applicants for licensure are required to complete the requirements of the chosen option in the order listed. No licensure pathway is set to expire. The board is authorized to waive any examination requirement for an individual who is licensed to practice professional land surveying in another state; however, the board is not specifically authorized to require the individual to pass the State-specific exam or any part of a nationally administered exam that the applicant has previously failed.

Current law does not specify minimum credit hours for a four-year curriculum in land surveying as it pertains to licensure requirements, but it does require that the curriculum be approved by the board.

Background: The board licenses and permits approximately 1,000 individuals, partnerships, and corporations to practice land surveying and property line surveying in the State. According to the Maryland Society of Surveyors, about 40% of current licensees prepared for their career as a professional land surveyor by combining postsecondary school courses in surveying with extensive on-the-job training; the remaining 60% followed the nonacademic, experience-only pathways. However, in a recent two-year period, the board advises that it issued 33 *initial* licenses to individuals and that 3, 15, 11, and 4 were issued under each of the four pathways to licensure, respectively.

According to the Maryland Society of Surveyors, 23 states plus the District of Columbia require a degree as a prerequisite for licensure as a land surveyor. There is a two-year 32-credit program in land surveying at the Catonsville campus of the Community College of Baltimore County.

Chapter 102 of 2013 allowed for the computer-based (as opposed to written) delivery of uniform national licensing examinations to applicants for licensure as professional land surveyors. The Act also increased the experience requirement from four years to eight years for applicants without a college degree who pass the two land surveying examinations (the fourth pathway in Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1
Four Ways to Qualify for Licensure as Professional Land Surveyor
Current Law

Academic – Approved Land Surveying Curriculum

- Graduate from a college or university with at least a four-year curriculum in land surveying
- Pass fundamentals of surveying examination
- Have two years satisfactory experience in land surveying
- Pass principles and practice of surveying examination and, unless excused by the board, State-specific modules

Academic – Other College or University Curriculum

- Graduate upon completion of at least a four-year curriculum from an accredited college or university
- Pass fundamentals of surveying examination
- Have four years satisfactory experience in land surveying
- Pass principles and practice of surveying examination and, unless excused by the board, State-specific modules

Nonacademic – 12 Years Work Experience

- Graduate from high school or equivalent
- Have 12 years satisfactory experience in land surveying*
- Pass principles and practice of surveying examination and, unless excused by the board, State-specific modules

Nonacademic – 8 Years Work Experience and Testing

- Graduate from high school or equivalent
- Have eight years satisfactory experience in land surveying*
- Pass fundamentals of surveying examination
- Pass principles and practice of surveying examination and, unless excused by the board, State-specific modules

*For each 30 semester hours of completed land surveying courses, the board may allow a one-year credit toward the experience requirement for a maximum of three years.

Source: Laws of Maryland

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Maryland Society of Surveyors; Department of Legislative Services

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