

The ASEE Engineering Technology Council Position Statement re. Modification of GS-0800 Engineering Qualification Standard Maintained by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Issue:

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has authority over the qualification standards that define the credentials required of applicants seeking employment with the federal government. The qualification standard governing applicants for entry-level engineering positions is GS-0800, and currently the 'basic' applicant requirement identified in GS-0800 is successful completion of an ABET-accredited 'engineering' degree. The basic requirement does not recognize as adequate preparation the successful completion of an ABET-accredited Bachelor of Science Engineering Technology degree. Instead, to be considered, applicants with that educational degree are required to provide proof of additional qualifications over and above having earned an ABET-accredited Bachelor of Science Engineering Technology degree.

Since federal agencies adhere to the GS-0800 standard, that standard often informs and influences federal (and state) contractors, thus limiting access to entry-level engineering positions for graduates from ABET-accredited Bachelor of Science Engineering Technology programs. Clearly engineering jobs, both in and outside of the federal government, are influenced by this standard.

Position:

The ASEE Engineering Technology Council (ETC) strongly recommends that the Office of Personnel Management revise the GS-0800 general classification standard such that it recognizes successful completion of either ABET-accredited Engineering or an ABET-accredited Engineering Technology Bachelor of Science degree as meeting 'basic requirements' for applicants to entry-level engineering positions. Such change would reflect current industry practice, increase the size of the engineering applicant pool, and thus increase the diversity of the nation's engineering workforce.

Qualifying Statements:

This GS-0800 standard defines entry to the minimum level of federal engineering jobs, and it is supplemented by other standards that many federal agencies use to define specialized roles. As with all jobs, career progression may well require experience and/or additional training. This position statement seeks only to open the first door, with the full understanding that it is up to the individual to advance from there.

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