

SPE Certification Program Allows Members to Gain Professional Recognition

SPE provides opportunities for professionals to enhance their technical and professional competence. Credentialing is one way for individuals to demonstrate their technical knowledge and dedication to their profession. In 2004, SPE developed the Petroleum Engineering Certification Program for members to achieve recognition of their technical and professional achievements through examination in the form of an international credential. This is of particular benefit to members in regions and countries that do not have credentialing programs for petroleum engineers.

"The certification exam is targeted to areas of the world that do not have government licensing bodies to regulate the practice of engineering in that country," said Byron Haynes Jr., development planning team leader for Petroleum Development Oman, and chairperson of the SPE Petroleum Engineering Certification Committee. "Engineers working in these parts of the world take this exam to show that they possess engineering skills that can be verified through an international body such as SPE."

Certification Benefits

An engineer must continue to increase his or her development through continuing self-development. The SPE Petroleum Engineering Certification Program can be extremely beneficial to an engineer's professional and personal life.

"By taking the exam, people show their employers that they have an engineering education and experience that is recognized by an international standard," said Haynes. "This exam is useful when applying for jobs to show prospective employers that they are qualified and that they have basic petroleum engineering skills that are recognized internationally."

Even if the certification is not required by a member's employer, there are several reasons to consider the program.

- Public and professional recognition of compliance with the standards established by SPE for the petroleum professional
- Self-satisfaction of completing

the certification on a voluntary basis to demonstrate commitment to the profession

- Demonstrate technical knowledge with recognition of skills
- Recognition of technical knowledge from peers
- Recognition of certification achievement by employer
- Promote career advancement
- Enhance the reputation of a petroleum professional

Many employers support their employees taking the exam. "There are in many cases incentives such as the company paying for the exam, giving the employee time off to sit for the exam, and some companies are actually giving raises to engineers who sit and take the exam successfully," Haynes said. "This sends a message to the engineering community that these companies are supporting the establishment of engineering certification. These companies also use this exam as a training tool to verify engineering competence within the company and placement for other engineering assignments."

The SPE Petroleum Engineering Certification Program requires that applicants demonstrate a minimum level of technical knowledge to be certified. This is established through a four-step evaluation of each applicant, including:

- Education—An undergraduate engineering degree from an accredited institution.
- Examination—An examination to measure the level of engineering fundamentals learned from education and to measure the applicant's ability to solve practical engineering problems. The examination may be waived if the applicant has previously passed a written examination qualifying them to practice in petroleum engineering as a registered, licensed, chartered, or professional engineer.
- Experience—Experience and training in the engineering community, usually for a minimum of 4 years.
- Ethics—Professional peer references for performance and attitudes.
- Membership—Member in good standing with SPE.

The exam is a 100-question, multiple choice test that is designed around three areas of technical knowledge: drilling;

completion, production, and facilities; and reservoir. The exam problems are based on common problems seen in actual day-to-day operations. Twenty exam problems cover general questions about petroleum. The exam is an open-book test. Members are allowed to bring as many references as they want.

The application and exam fee is USD 125. Applications and related forms can be found at SPE.org in the Career/Education section. To prepare for the examination, applicants can download a Study Guide that includes a sample exam, along with recommendations for study and references. Additionally, SPE offers an exam review course at conferences and other venues. Exam sessions and review courses are held throughout the year, and a calendar of events can be found at SPE.org.

The Petroleum Professional Certification Subcommittee of SPE is responsible for the content of the Petroleum Professional Certification examination. The Petroleum Professional Certification Subcommittee of the SPE Engineering Professionalism Committee consists of up to 15 SPE members who are engineers and who serve staggered 4-year terms. The Subcommittee develops and reviews the SPE certification examination.

Upon passing the examination, the applicant may refer to himself or herself as having achieved certification under the SPE Petroleum Engineering Certification Program. The applicant may use the acronym of SPEC (SPE Certification) on any public document or on any marketing materials, including, without limitation, brochures, business cards, letterhead, and advertisements.

For a member to maintain SPE certification, SPE requires that they participate in 15 hours of continued professional development and education annually. This could consist of courses, workshops, attendance at conferences, online learning, and society activities.

Since the program was developed in 2004, Haynes says that the number of people taking the exam has increased. "This is evident from the rise in the number of exam sessions being held in Oman and Abu Dhabi." In 2006, 24 people passed the exam offered in Abu

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In this issue, *TWA* introduces a new section for photography lovers to publish their "best shot." Yes, keep taking pictures out there when you are in the field and let us publish your work. For this issue, we have two pictures submitted by our editors from their own experiences in the fields. Energy, whether it is fossil fuels or renewables, will continue to play a critical role in the global economy in the future. What do you think of fossil fuel vs. renewable resources within the next decade? Can you tell it in pictures?



Alpha and Beta Centaurus

Andrés Zoldi, Petroleum Engineer, Chevron, Buenos Aires

Alpha and beta centaurus, the shiniest stars of the southern hemisphere, as seen above the El Trapial Field in Argentina's Neuquén Province. Sundown is always peaceful in the desert. The well seen in the picture was the fruit of many months of reservoir characterization, and a late-night visit to "nurse" it gave me the chance to take this photo. *Equipment used: Nikon D40, 18 mm, 1 sec. at f/3.5, ISO400.*



Oklahoma Wind Power

Lisa Song, Field Engineer, Schlumberger, Oklahoma

It was a foggy afternoon just before the sun went down when I captured this picture in central Oklahoma. Oklahoma is large oil and gas producing state in the central US, located in "tornado alley," and wind power has become one of several options for Oklahoma's energy resources. *Equipment used: Sony DSC-W7, CyberShot*

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Dhabi and 21 people passed the exam in another session in 2007. Later that year, 17 passed the exam in Bahrain, 1 in Jakarta, and 3 people took the exam at the SPE Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition. In 2008, 22 passed the exam given in Abu Dhabi. Additionally, engineers from France and Nigeria have traveled to Middle East exam sessions.

The YP Benefit

Young professionals can benefit from taking the exam as well as more experienced professionals. "My mentor encouraged me to take the exam," said Carlos Bahamon-Velasquez, a petroleum engineer from Colombia who is currently working for Occidental Petroleum in Houston. He passed the exam in November 2008.

"This is a good time to get young professionals to seek this as an opportunity for professional growth, to distinguish themselves from other candidates in the job market, to be committed to the profession, and to achieve a standardized minimum knowledge requirement to be called a petroleum professional (or engineer)," he said. "The exam assesses how much we learned from school and the practice of the profession, whether it is drilling, completing, producing, or understanding the reservoir. It also just feels good to know that you accomplished passing a difficult exam. It gives you more confidence performing your work." **TWA**

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have proved to complement technical competence in oil and gas industry managers and leaders.

A Student Paper Contest was also held in conjunction with the conference, so the workshop audience included not only Moscow students but representatives from 17 student chapters in the Russian and Caspian region as well. Presentations on each of the above-mentioned values were given by both YPs and students, and discussion focused on how to apply these values in the real world. Many participants emphasized that putting these values into practice would be beneficial not just for their working careers, but for their life as well.

The mission of bridging YPs with industry seniors was well carried out at the Moscow workshop, and the represented student chapters declared their intention to work more closely with YPs on initiatives in the future. **TWA**