

S582 COUNCIL OF SOIL SCIENCE EXAMINERS**A. Status:**

The Council of Soil Science Examiners (CSSE) is responsible for developing and maintaining a national examination program that is 1) representative of knowledge necessary to practice soil science in a manner that will protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, 2) representative of knowledge used to protect, to the extent practicable, the environment, and 3) will ensure fairness to all candidates to whom the examination is administered. The CSSE is responsible for developing and maintaining the national examinations and facilitating the maintenance and update of the Soil Science Performance Objectives (POs) on which these examinations are based. The SSSA delegates the authority to administer and maintain an examination program to the CSSE.

B. Composition and Tenure:

1. The CSSE will consist of a maximum of 15 members including the 3 executive committee members. When the full CSSE is not in session, the Executive Committee will carry out activities of the CSSE. The CSSE is composed of members that represent a geographic distribution across the U.S., a balance in terminal degree levels (B.S., M.S., and Ph.D.), a mix between academic, government and private sector careers, and a balance in the expertise within the technical competency areas. This mix of committee personnel helps to ensure that the exams are balanced and useful as a national examination in soil science. CSSE members must be licensed or certified; if a member is not licensed or certified, they will not be allowed to sit for the exams for at least 5 years after their tenure with the CSSE is completed.

The CSSE members develop new examination questions and implement the appropriate revisions. The CSSE members are selected based on their expertise in one or more of six competency areas that comprise the Soil Science POs. These technical areas are: Soil Chemistry & Mineralogy, Soil Fertility & Nutrient Management, Soil Physics, Soil Genesis/Classification/Morphology, Soil Biology & Soil Ecology, and Soil & Land Use Management. The CSSE also utilizes a Resource Team whose members have similar background and experience as listed for the CSSE. The Resource Team is an informal group that has a primary function of drafting soil science exam questions and submitting them to the CSSE for consideration. The Resource Team has no other function other than to draft exam questions and it does not meet. The CSSE, conducts the business of the soil science exam process. The CSSE also assigns an ad-hoc committee comprised of both CSSE members and practicing professionals to update the POs on a periodic basis. The ad-hoc committee drafts updated POs that are then sent out for peer review/comment and then are subsequently approved by the full CSSE.

The charge to the CSSE is to meet the responsibilities as listed: (a) determining appropriate content and forms for the examinations (b) setting passing scores for examinations, (c) developing all examination protocols, (d) setting fees and administrative procedures, (e) developing confidentiality procedures, (f) reviewing and approving modifications to the POs, (g) reviewing and approving (in consultation with the SSSA Executive Committee) changes to this document, and (h) approving nominations of new members, and the Chair, which are then sent forward to the President of SSSA.

2. Chair: This individual serves a 2-year term. The Chair officiates all meetings, forwards approved nominations, to the SSSA president, and sets the meeting dates for all CSSE functions. Any member of the CSSE may serve as Chair. The procedure for selecting a subsequent Chair is (a) nominations for Vice Chair are opened during the annual meeting of the existing Chair's terminal year, (b) any member of the CSSE nominates another member, (c) a nominee garners a simple majority vote of all members, (d) the Chair sends the nominee's name to the SSSA President, who then appoints the nominee. If voting membership does not ratify the initial nominee, steps a through d are repeated. If the SSSA President does not appoint the nominee, steps a through e are repeated.
3. Tenure: The normal term of appointments for the Executive Committee consists of Vice Chair, Chair and Past Chair, each serving a 2-year term with automatic rotation from Vice Chair to Chair to Past Chair. No one may serve more than two consecutive three-year terms as a member of the CSSE and only one term as an Executive Committee member. Appointments will be staggered so that no more than two members from each of the six areas of expertise are replaced each year.

C. Functions:

1. Periodically review the Soil Science POs, revise them as needed, and formally approve the revised POs.
2. Each year, write new examination questions for the question pool based on the POs and maintain the examination question pool.
3. Develop the examinations' forms and approve the examinations' content.
4. Set the passing scores for the examinations.
5. Develop protocols for scoring the examinations, equating the exam scores, and reporting the exam scores.
6. Set the exam fees and develop protocols for administering the exam.
7. Protect the confidentiality of the examinations.
8. The CSSE will hold one meeting annually. Any member of the CSSE may make a motion at any meeting, but motions must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the CSSE.

D. Presidential Responsibilities:

The SSSA President will:

1. Will make appointments based on the names submitted by the Chair. It is the responsibility of the Chair to make sure the nominees meet the requirements to serve on the CSSE as describe in Section II, above. A balance must be maintained between academic, government and private sector participants and the technical competency areas. In addition the geographic distribution of the committee members across the U.S. must be maintained as well as a balance between terminal degree levels.
2. Transmits to the Chair those matters that the SSSA Executive Committee wishes the CSSE to consider.