

SDG&E Designer Qualification Program (2025)

1. Purpose

- The Designer Qualification Program allows external distribution designers, both Applicant Designers (AD) and Contract Designers (CD), to become pre-qualified by the utility to perform design for SDG&E and subsequently gain access to SDG&E design systems such as ICUE.
- SDG&E requires Applicant Designers to be pre-qualified by the utility, as allowed under the Tariffs.
- SDG&E's Supply Management may require "Qualified" designers within contract language and Requests for Proposals (RFP's) as opportunities arise for Contract Design services.
- The program tracks external designers who perform Applicant Design, Contract Design, and those who perform both.
- Qualified external designers who perform Applicant Design are posted externally for SDG&E customers. Qualified external designers performing Contract Design are posted internally for SDG&E business purposes.
- SDG&E Design Managers reserve the right to disqualify and remove access to design tools to external designers if necessary.
- The Designer Qualification Program is specifically designed for non-employees who are actively engaged in design work for SDGE or its applicants. Current SDGE employees, or those without contractual obligations to an external company, are not eligible for the DQP. Please note that the DQP serves as a qualification mechanism, not a certification, for conducting design work.

2. Definitions

- **Qualified (per discipline)** – For the purpose of this program, "Qualified" is defined as an external designer who has passed a DQP Exam (within the discipline) and is approved to perform Applicant Design or Contract Design for SDG&E (within that discipline). The term Qualified does not measure the level of design experience. Each discipline has a unique exam.
- **Discipline** – Type of design, commonly referred to as Overhead (OH), Underground (UG), Gas, or Transformer Vault. All disciplines in this program and document refer to distribution.
- **Applicant Designer** – Refers to an individual performing Applicant Design work through Tariff (Rule 15/16/13). SDG&E does not pay the vendor for this design work.
- **Contract Designer** – Refers to a contractor who is performing Contract Design work for SDG&E through a vendor.
- **Supply Management** – Refers to the SDG&E organization supporting company contracts and agreements with vendors.

3. Overview

- Enrollment into the program begins when an external designer registers (aka applicant) for an exam within one of four disciplines.
- Upon passing the exam, the applicant will be “Qualified” within that discipline and the applicant will be given access to SDG&E design tools.
- The Transformer Vault exam is only made available to designers who are qualified in Underground Electric.
- Interested candidates and vendors should visit: <https://www.sdge.com/designer-qualifications-resources>
 - Content includes information such as:
 - About the program
 - How to become a Qualified Designer
 - Resources
 - Firms interested in Contract Design
 - Looking for a Qualified Applicant Designer
 - Frequently Asked Questions

4. Testing

- As mentioned previously, the Designer Qualification Program offers four exam disciplines: Overhead Electric, Underground Electric, Gas, and Transformer Vault. Each discipline has its own unique test.
- The applicant will be tested in the discipline or disciplines they wish to pursue. These tests will demonstrate their knowledge of design, including but not limited to GO95, GO128 and SDG&E Construction and Design Standards, Overhead, Underground and Gas engineering calculations, SDG&E construction methods, Service Standards, and Work Order Guidelines.
- Applicants may enroll in one or any combination of disciplines with one exception:
 - The Transformer Vault exam will be made available to designers who are qualified in Underground Electric.
- DQP exams are conducted in person at the SDG&E location specified in the exam confirmation email and will be proctored by a DQP administrator.
- It should be noted that CP East is not part of the Century Park main campus.
- Detailed exam instructions will be provided prior to each exam.
- The purpose of in person proctoring is to keep the integrity of the exams and prevent cheating.
- Exam rules and conduct will be reviewed with test takers during the exam meeting.
- Each exam instance is designed to be unique. Many questions rely on question banks which randomly choose questions.

- SDG&E does not provide contractor training. Training is the vendor's responsibility.
- If an applicant does not pass an exam, they will be required to wait three months to register for another exam in that discipline. This applies to all exams.
- After multiple failed attempts within a given discipline, SDG&E, at its discretion, may limit further testing.
- It is the responsibility of the designer's company to provide training for the exam. The Designer Qualification Program will provide information needed, such as manuals, and standards during the exam.

5. Disqualification

- Adherence to program rules is required by all design vendors, applicants, and Qualified Designers.
- All disqualifying events are reviewed and are assessed due to the severity and potential damage to integrity of exam(s).
- Reviews may include DQP Administrators and Program Manager, SDG&E Ethics, SDG&E Legal and may involve third-party investigators.
 - Violations include:
 - Sharing exam content before, during, or after testing with anyone.
 - Documenting exam content, questions, or answers
 - Using Smartphones, smartwatches and headphones.
 - Emailing, IM'ing, texting, or asking exam content questions to others (even to DQP Admins). The exam itself offers an option for feedback.
 - Not following pre-exam instructions. The "Do's" and "Don't" are explained in detail prior to the exam.
 - Obtaining, using, or creating test keys at any time.
- Consequences of violations range from abruptly ending exams, temporary probation, to permanent disqualification and removal of access to SDG&E design tools.