

Good Morning Collateral Friends:

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) is currently seeking comments on proposed changes to the Intern Development Program (IDP), the Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA), and the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA). Changes to the IDP specifically relate to the hours required to complete the program and the categories and areas in which interns need to document their experience, while changes to the BEA and BEFA programs relate to eligibility requirements and review processes to complete the programs for NCARB certification.

Years of pulsing our members, asking "why", and challenging conventional wisdom has led to these proposals for sustainable change. Change that embraces "rigor for a reason," rather than rigor for the sake of rigor. This approach has led to two proposals that will ensure continued protection of the public's health, safety, and welfare.

The first proposal involves the IDP and is being offered as a two step-change with Phase 1 being a short-term streamlining of the IDP, and Phase 2 a longer-term overhaul plan for the IDP. The second proposal involves the Broadly Experienced Architect program and is designed to determine that an applicant for licensure is competent to practice architecture independently at the point of *initial* licensure. Lastly, the third proposal involves the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect program and is designed to acknowledge each member boards' responsibility to determine that an applicant for reciprocal licensure is competent to practice architecture independently.

I have attached a detailed description of the proposed changes with background information. We are accepting input, including suggested adjustments to our proposals, through 5:00 P.M. on **Friday, September 5, 2014**. To submit your comments please click on the following link and complete the survey: <http://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/1693931/Proposed-changes-to-the-IDP-BEA-and-BEFA>.

Please feel free to share this with your local components as well.

Feel free to contact me, Derek Haese (dhaese@ncarb.org), or Harry Falconer (hfalconer@ncarb.org) if you have any questions.

Regards,

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Proposed Changes – Intern Development Program Phase 1 Streamline and Phase 2 Overhaul

PROPOSED CHANGE TO IDP – PHASE 1: STREAMLINE

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED CHANGE?

This proposed change will allow interns to complete IDP upon documenting completion of the **core hour requirements**. Currently interns must document 3,740 hours in 17 different experience areas to meet the “core” hour requirements of IDP; however, to complete the program they need to document an additional 1,860 hours in any of the 17 experience areas. This proposed change would, for the first time since the inaugural year of IDP, require interns to satisfy only the core hour requirements to complete their internship – a total of 3,740 hours.

WHY SHOULD THIS CHANGE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Removal of the elective hour requirement will reduce complexities while ensuring that intern architects still acquire the comprehensive experience that is essential for competent practice, and result in a program that is both justifiable and defensible. This proposed change is designed to reflect how the marketplace, education, and technology have all impacted ways in which experience is gained. Upon final approval, this change would take effect in early 2015.

The NCARB Board of Directors preliminarily approved the following revisions to modify the IDP “Reporting Requirements” for Member Board comment:

Modify the IDP Guidelines, December 2013 and remove all references to the elective hour requirements. This will include:

- *Removal of definition of elective hours, page 12*
- *Removal of elective hours required to complete the program – page 12*
- *Removal of references to supplemental experience for elective hour credit – Pages 13 and 18 - 20*

RATIONALE

Focus on Program Requirements Outlined in Practice Analysis

The data resulting from the Internship Survey of the *2012 NCARB Practice Analysis of Architecture* informed the appropriate distribution of core hour requirements among the IDP experience areas. However, the data will not and never has been used to inform the elective hour requirements. Therefore, it should be noted that the current internship program contains a substantial elective requirement that is not informed or guided by data. Furthermore, considering the inherent “elective” nature of the additional elective hours, there can be no proof that this requirement ensures any level of competency or greater protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the public. It simply

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ensures more time in internship, not necessarily more quality or broader experience. The requirements of internship should be governed by content (as outlined in the *Practice Analysis*), not time.

Additionally, the Practice Analysis data strongly suggests that practitioners do not view supplemental experience as an acceptable alternative to on-the-job performance. Removal of the elective hour requirement will call for the elimination of supplemental experience opportunities that qualify for elective hours. The Board determined that supplemental experience that counts for core hours should remain and called for a renewed focus on improving the value of supplemental experience.

No Evidence (Historical or Contemporary) that Elective Hours Ensure Greater Competency and Further Promote Protection of HSW

As defined in the *IDP Guidelines*, core minimum hours are “the minimum number of hours you must earn in a given experience category or area.” Elective hours are “experience hours that exceed the 3,740 core minimum requirement.” There is no stipulation for specific experience areas in which elective hours must be earned, so interns can potentially complete the program by documenting all of their elective hours in a single experience area. Interns can also meet their elective hour requirement by documenting excess community service and completing supplemental experience. Neither one of these options guarantee greater competency or increased protection of the health, safety and welfare of the public.

In addition, since there is not a requirement that calls for the distribution of elective hours, it can be assumed that the core hours are the hours required to actually obtain minimal competency in a given experience area. Thereby, documenting the completion of the core hours should establish an intern’s requisite competency in all of the current 17 experience areas.

Advances in Technology and Practice

IDP is the standard accepted means of meeting the experience requirement of most NCARB Member Boards. However, the last 40 years has seen an evolution in technology and practice. In the 1970s and 1980s interns and architects could spend significant time completing tasks that the interns and architects of today can complete in minutes or even seconds. In the 70s and 80s interns and architects would spend hours utilizing a pencil and draft paper to complete what was then a manual process. The introduction of CAD, BIM, and other digital resources has changed the game. Interns and architects are exposed to more substantial concepts sooner, make higher level decisions earlier, and produce a more detailed product in less time than ever before. And while technology has drastically sped up the process in which an architect conducts his/her work, the program requirements for internship have not evolved. The Board of Directors believed this evolution of technology and practice warrants a fresh look at the total hours required to complete IDP

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and ultimately determined that the *core hours* are the *experience hours* that ensure competent practice.

PROPOSED CHANGE TO OVERHAUL IDP – PHASE 2

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED CHANGE TO OVERHAUL IDP?

The current program includes four (4) experience categories and 17 experience areas. This proposed change calls for development of a new IDP framework in which an intern would be required to document hours in six (6) experience categories only that directly align with the six phase-based areas of contemporary practice; practice management, project management, programming & analysis, project planning & design, project development & documentation, and construction & evaluation. In addition, interns would no longer be required to document hours in numerous experience areas within a given category. Instead, these six categories would include recommended tasks that would qualify for credit as well as a guideline for the “appropriate” amount of diversified experience.

WHY SHOULD THIS CHANGE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Modifying the IDP framework and requiring interns to document their experience within six (6) categories that directly align with the six phase-based areas of architecture will reduce complexity and align with the current realities and challenges of contemporary practice; all while ensuring intern architects still acquire the comprehensive experience that is essential for competent practice. This proposed change is designed to reflect how the marketplace, education, and technology have all impacted ways in which experience is gained. Upon final approval, this change would take effect in mid to late 2016

Note - The NCARB Board of Directors preliminarily approved the concept of aligning the IDP experience categories with the phase-based categories of contemporary practice, but details of the transition will be dependent upon approval from the membership and subsequent work of the Internship Committee.

RATIONALE

Alignment of Programs with Contemporary Practice

Changing the framework of IDP from four (4) Experience Categories and 17 Experience Areas to six (6) Experience Categories aligns the program with the same developmental structure as the ARE. As NCARB works to better integrate the programs for licensure, it is useful and efficient when all programs build from the same foundation. A better aligned series of programs allows each program, whether it be IDP or ARE, to utilize the same

Proposed Changes – Intern Development Program Phase 1 Streamline and Phase 2 Overhaul

foundation but focus developmentally on each program’s purpose. IDP is meant to ensure that experience is gained completing tasks, while the ARE ensures that an actual level of knowledge is acquired. Therefore, IDP and ARE can now focus on specific experience aspects and specific testing aspects respectively using a standardized, mutually accepted set of topics.

Broader Focus

The current 17 experience areas of IDP, in combination with their respective minimum hour requirements, reflect an extremely specific and detailed format that keeps internship focused on the details rather than the broader picture. The level of detail required by both the intern, the IDP supervisor, and the mentor relegate the current internship process to more of an accounting practice rather than a true learning experience. A move to a broader IDP that focuses on capturing the “big picture,” will allow the intern to more freely explore learning opportunities within the office or on a particular project, rather than maintaining a primary focus on checking-off a box and poring over timesheets.

Increased Flexibility

The current practice of architecture involves a greater variety of activities, building types, practice types, and projects than ever before. This degree of variety in practice requires a greater level flexibility in any standardized approach to licensure. Since no two interns are likely to have the same experience over the course of their internships, the IDP must be able to adapt to this variety. A program that focuses on the over-arching six phase-based experience areas subsequently accommodates and welcomes the current variety in the profession and encourages interns to embrace it. Interns will no longer be pressured into conforming their internship to the IDP. Rather, the IDP will allow their internship to take a more natural and organic direction, indicative of the reality of today’s practice.

Improved Usability and Understanding

The current IDP requires an extensive understanding of the program rules and requirements in order to effectively and efficiently progress through the program. The high volume of experience areas (17), and their complementary hourly requirements, contributes significantly to the program’s complexity. Furthermore, interns, IDP supervisors, and mentors must also understand the knowledge/skills and tasks associated with each of the 17 experience areas. A change to six phase-based experience categories will significantly reduce this complexity, allowing interns, IDP supervisors, and mentors a more usable and understandable program. A focus on only six phase-based experience areas delivers an internship that allows all involved to focus on the execution of internship and not the internship program itself.

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO STREAMLINE AND
OVERHUAL IDP****IMPETUS FOR CHANGE**

Created jointly in the 1970s by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Intern Development Program (IDP) identifies the comprehensive experience that is essential for the independent practice of architecture. Except for the year in which the concept of IDP was formed, the requirement has always been the equivalent of three (3) years duration.

Historical research indicates that the NCARB membership, while in search of ways to prove competency through means other than a duration requirement, initially proposed what we now know as IDP as a two year requirement. This proposal was brought for a vote and successfully passed in 1971 and the NCARB Model Law was updated accordingly. However, this was short lived as in 1972 the Model Law was amended to stipulate that the program should be three (3) years in duration. Research indicates this change was brought about in an effort to comply with the requirements outlined in the laws and rules of the NCARB Member Boards. Getting “buy in” from the Member Boards was key to facilitating licensure across state borders.

Flash forward 40 years and IDP has become the standard accepted means of meeting the experience requirement of most NCARB Member Boards. However, concerns that the IDP contains extensive requirements that make it difficult for users to comprehensively understand; is overwhelmingly resource intensive to administer; and often takes interns significantly longer to complete than intended led to the formation of a multi-department special research team in April 2013. The team was tasked with thoroughly analyzing the Internship Development Program and providing the NCARB Board of Directors with an in-depth analysis of options identifying ways to streamline the experience requirement while ensuring interns acquire the comprehensive experience essential for competent practice.

The multi-departmental research team was formed to ensure that viewpoints from all areas of Council operations would be taken into consideration. In addition, leaders of the special research team facilitated focus groups with members of the Internship Advisory Committee (IAC), Education Committee, Licensure Task Force, and Intern Think Tank during FY14. The goal of these focus groups was to garner feedback from key stakeholders that could assist the team in identifying the options that our Member Boards and key stakeholders might feel most comfortable adopting. Members involved in the focus groups were comprised from NCARB, AIA, AIAS, ACSA, the Society of Design Administrators, and also included Member Board Chairs, Member Board Executives, Member Board Members, IDP Coordinators, recently licensed architects, and interns.

Proposed Changes – Intern Development Program Phase 1 Streamline and Phase 2 Overhaul

An exhaustive review of historic decisions, interviews of key stakeholders, and the use of agile project management approaches has resulted in proposals that preserve the rigor of IDP, and address elements which unnecessarily complicate the process of meeting the programs' goals. These changes can be characterized as a "course correction," mindful of the many years spent by volunteers in designing programs to address concerns of Member Boards.

The Board enters into this process understanding that unanimous adoption will surely not happen immediately, and that some jurisdictions may prefer a more gradual implementation. The Board strongly feels that our work over several years of strategic planning, surveying, brainstorming, and consultation with Member Boards has laid the foundation for significant streamlining of programs and reflects the consensus of the Council's many stakeholders.

Proposed Changes Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA)

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BEA?

An applicant for NCARB certification who does not meet the NCARB Education Requirement (a degree from a program in architecture accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)) shall:

1. meet a member board's education and experience requirements for initial licensure (**NEW**), and
2. successfully complete the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®), and
3. maintain a license to practice architecture in the jurisdiction of initial licensure in good standing without disciplinary action, for one year (**NEW**).

WHY SHOULD THIS CHANGE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Existing Program Requirements

The current BEA program requires an architect to demonstrate learning through experience for six to ten years after they obtain initial licensure depending on the architect's level of education. The applicant's education is evaluated by the NAAB in the Education Evaluation Service for Architects to identify 'education deficiencies.' The applicant documents satisfaction of education deficiencies through projects completed post licensure in an education dossier. The dossier is reviewed by the BEA Committee.

The Conversation

What is the relevancy of documenting years of learning through post-licensure experience? Member Boards issuing an initial license have already performed the necessary due diligence to ensure that all newly licensed architects have demonstrated the required level of learning through experience prior to licensure to competently practice architecture independently.

Architects who have obtained licensure through a combination of education and extended experience requirements have in fact met the education and experience requirements of an NCARB Member Board for initial licensure. They have had the required "opportunity" to demonstrate learning through experience for additional years beyond the IDP requirements for an NCARB Member Board to be confident they are competent to practice architecture independently upon obtaining licensure.

This proposal maintains that the additional *pre-licensure experience* warrants the reduction of the requirement for six, eight or ten years of post-licensure experience to one year; and the elimination of the education evaluation, education dossier, and dossier review.

Proposed Changes Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA)

RATIONALE

The research team focused on four principal areas of licensure:

- Regulation of Initial Licensure
- Education *and* Experience
- Post Licensure Experience
- Internship *is* Learning through Experience

Regulation of initial Licensure

All NCARB Member Boards have three requirements for initial licensure in common: education, experience, and examination. All Boards:

1. accept the professional degree in architecture from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) as satisfaction of the education requirement,
2. accept participation in the Intern Development Program (IDP) as a primary means for the satisfaction of the experience requirement,
3. require completion of the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) to satisfy the examination requirement,

NCARB's *Model Regulations* include the following:

“100.301 Initial Registration Standards

To be granted registration ... an applicant must meet the requirements set forth in 100.301–305.

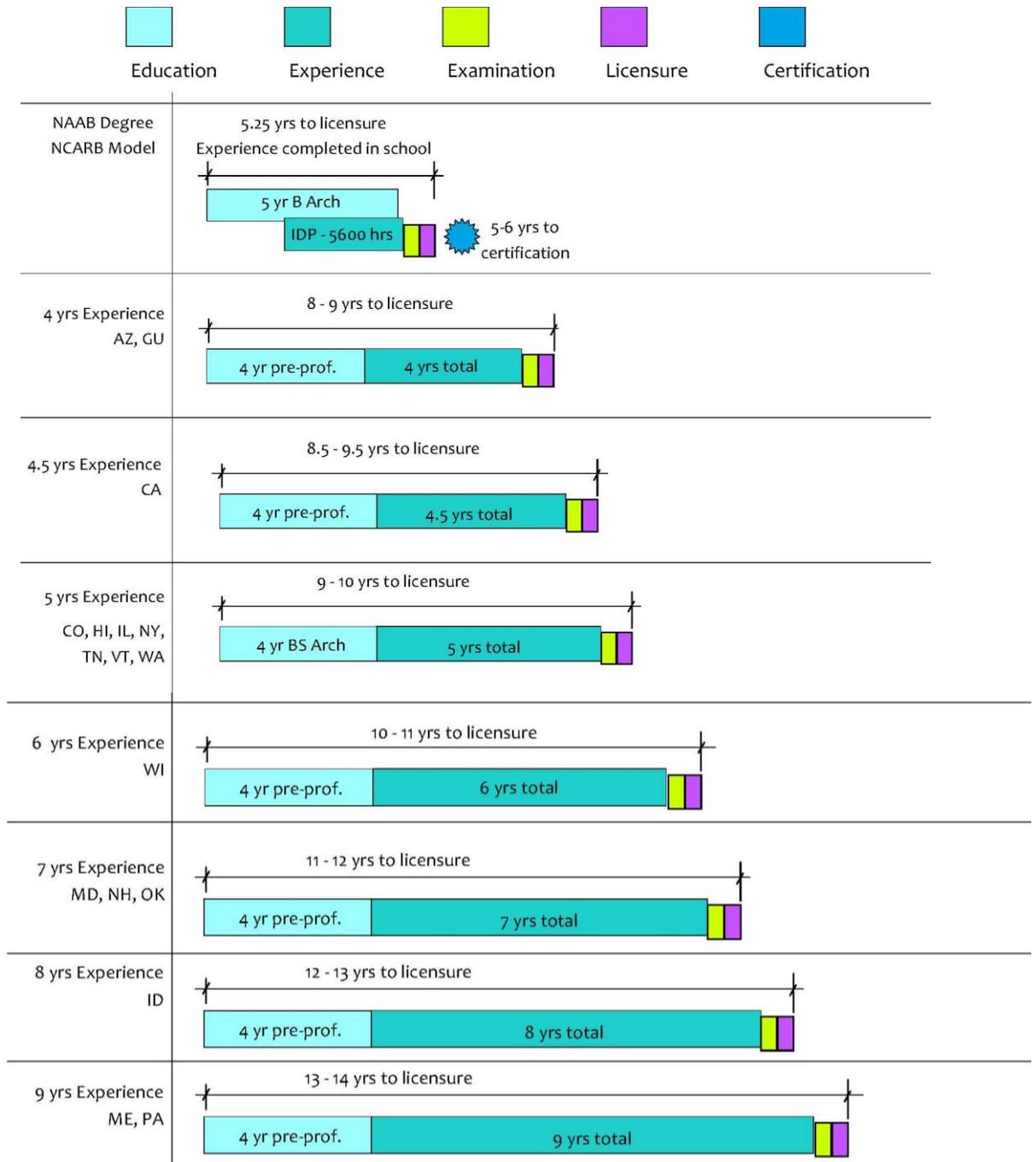
(B) Other experience may be substituted for the registration requirements set forth in 100.303 only insofar as the Board considers it to be equivalent to or better than such requirements. The burden shall be on the applicant to show by clear and convincing evidence the equivalency or better of such other experience.

Education and Experience

There are 17 Member Boards that do not **require** education from a program accredited by the NAAB; however, every one of those boards **require additional years of experience** under the supervision of an architect **prior to obtaining initial licensure**. The minimum number of years of pre-licensure experience varies from four years to 13 years, depending on the jurisdiction and level of education obtained. In essence, these boards are requiring substantial equivalency among all interns prior to initial licensure.

Proposed Changes Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA)

The following chart outlines the path(s) an intern travels to obtain initial licensure in the 17 jurisdictions that allow experience to supplement the education requirement. This chart, for comparison purposes, assumes an intern has obtained a four-year pre-professional degree in architecture (62% of applicants for certification have obtained this degree)

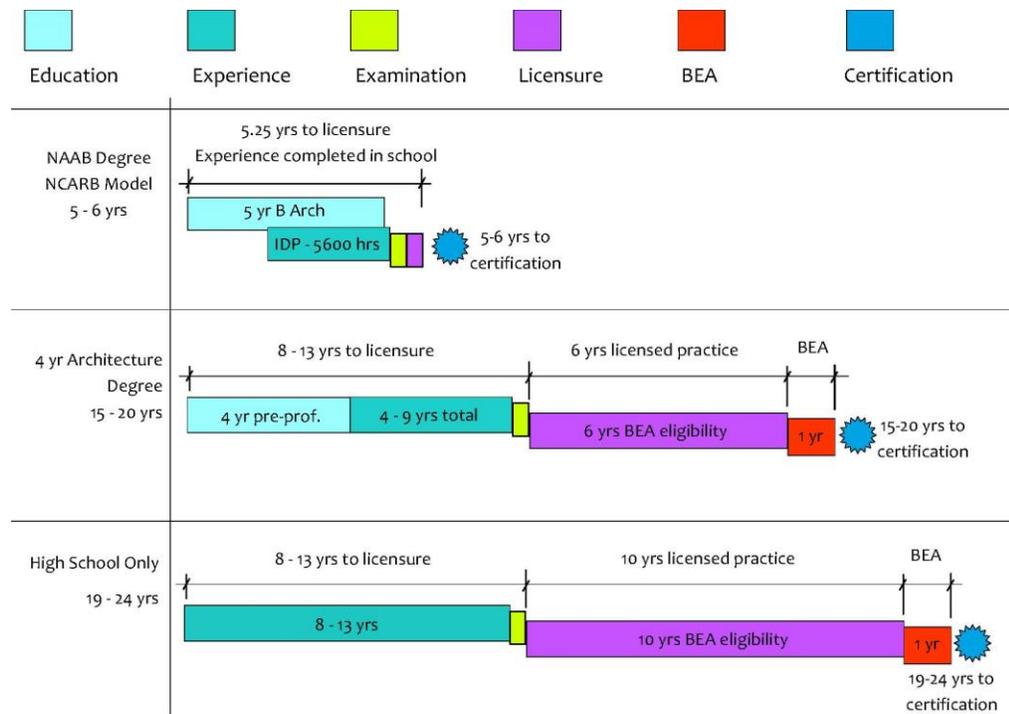


Proposed Changes Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA)

The Council’s BEA program requires a *licensed* architect to:

1. prove additional experience, as an architect, for another six, eight, or ten years, depending on the level of education obtained prior to initial licensure; and
2. “demonstrate learning through experience” post licensure to indicate how they overcame what are identified as education deficiencies.
(This is achieved through the development, submission, and review of an education dossier).

The following chart outlines the typical paths leading to application for NCARB certification through the BEA program, dependent on education obtained prior to experience:



Responsible Control

The objective of the education dossier is to allow architects to **demonstrate their learning through experience** as a registered architect to meet the requirements of the *NCARB Education Standard* as an alternative to the professional degree from a NAAB-accredited program. Applicants must describe their practice experience as a registered architect through which they **gained learning through experience**. Architects must select practice experience for which they were personally responsible that meets the definition of *responsible control*.

Proposed Changes

Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA)

The *NCARB Legislative Guidelines and Model Law/Model Regulations* define “responsible control” as:

*“That amount of **control over** and **detailed professional knowledge** of the content of technical submissions during their preparation as is ordinarily exercised by a registered architect **applying the required professional standard of care**, including but not limited to an architect’s **integration** of information from manufacturers, suppliers, installers, the architect’s consultants, owners, contractors, or other sources the architect reasonably trusts that is incidental to and intended to be incorporated into the architect’s technical submissions if the architect has **coordinated** and **reviewed** such information. Other review, or review and correction, of technical submissions after they have been prepared by others does not constitute the exercise of responsible control because the reviewer has neither control over nor detailed professional knowledge of the content of such submissions throughout their preparation.”*

The definition of *responsible control* does not indicate that an architect is to **demonstrate learning** through the experience of being **in responsible control**. It states that the architect in fact must have “detailed professional knowledge.”

Responsible control does not represent a learning opportunity. Responsible control is not evidence of overcoming an education deficiency.

Internship is Learning through Experience

The *NCARB Practice Analysis of Architecture* findings are significant to the profession and help **determine the knowledge and skills necessary to practice** architecture independently and protect the public’s health, safety, and welfare. The survey content addressed specific tasks and knowledge/skills related to pre-design, design, project management, and practice management, as well as general knowledge and skills. The knowledge/skills and tasks identified in the findings have been used to:

1. **Drive** the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®)
2. **Inform** the Intern Development Program (IDP)
3. **Guide** NCARB’s contribution to the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) Accreditation Review Conferences (ARC) and the Council’s future continuing education policies

The *NAAB’s Student Performance Criteria (SPC)* are linked seamlessly into the subject areas defined in the *NCARB Education Standard*. Further, the *NAAB’s SPC* are linked seamlessly to the knowledge/skills necessary to perform the tasks required by the *Intern Development Program (IDP)*.

Proposed Changes Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA)

Therefore, it is logical to assume that an architect having participated in the IDP and having completed education combined with additional experience required by a member board has demonstrated learning through experience at the time of initial licensure.

Architects who have obtained licensure through a combination of education and extended experience requirements have in fact met the education and experience requirements of an NCARB Member Board for initial licensure. NCARB facilitates licensure. The NCARB Certificate facilitates reciprocal licensure. The NCARB Certificate must acknowledge the rigor imposed on applicants for initial licensure by Member Boards.

IMPETUS FOR STUDY

Years of pulsing you, our members, asking “why”, and challenging conventional wisdom are leading to sustainable change. Change that embraces “rigor for a reason,” rather than rigor for the sake of rigor. This approach has led to a discussion of proposed changes to the BEA program that recognizes the rigor imposed by each member board in the reciprocal licensing of architects that ensures protection of the public’s health, safety, and welfare.

These proposed changes are designed to acknowledge each member boards’ responsibility to determine that an applicant for reciprocal licensure is competent to practice architecture independently. Feedback received in response to the request will be used to inform discussions by the Board of Directors at the September and December meetings.

Concerns that the BEA program contains extensive requirements that are difficult for architects to comprehensively understand; is overwhelmingly resource intensive to administer; and often takes architects significantly longer to complete than intended led to the formation of a multi-department special research team in August 2013. The team was tasked with thoroughly analyzing the Broadly Experienced Architect Program and providing the NCARB Board of Directors with an in-depth analysis of options identifying ways to improve requirements for NCARB certification while ensuring the program is objective, attainable, sustainable, and defensible.

The multi-departmental research team was formed to ensure that diverse would be taken into consideration. In addition, leaders of the team engaged BEA and Education Committee members, architects who have participated in the program, and architects that would like to pursue certification in conversations on various requirements of the current program. The goal of these conversations was to garner feedback from key stakeholders that could assist the team in identifying the options that Member Boards and key stakeholders might feel most comfortable adopting.

Proposed Changes Broadly Experienced Architect Program (BEA)

An exhaustive review of historic decisions, interviews of key stakeholders, and the use of agile project management approaches has delivered proposals that preserve the rigor of BEA but addresses elements which unnecessarily complicate the process of meeting the programs' goals. These changes can be characterized as a "course correction," mindful of the many years spent by volunteers in designing programs to address concerns of Member Boards. The Board of Directors enter into these iterations understanding that unanimous adoption will surely not happen immediately, and that some jurisdictions may prefer a more gradual implementation. The Board of Directors strongly feel that our work over several years of strategic planning, surveying, brainstorming, and consultation with Member Boards has laid the foundation for significant streamlining of programs and reflects the consensus of the Council's many stakeholders.

Proposed Changes

Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA)

Foreign architects are defined, for the purpose of the BEFA program, as individuals credentialed to practice architecture in a foreign country, through that country's requirements for education, experience, and examination, if any.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BEFA?

An applicant for NCARB certification who is licensed/credentialed in a country other than the U.S. or Canada shall:

1. Hold a current license/credential as an architect in a country that has a formal record keeping method for disciplinary actions for architects, and
2. **Education**: Hold a recognized education credential that leads to the lawful practice of architecture in a country other than the U.S. or Canada, and
3. **Experience (NEW)**: Document two years of active licensed/credentialed practice in the country of licensure/credential; or Document two years working in the U.S. under the direct supervision of an architect in responsible control, and
4. **Examination (NEW)**: Complete the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®)

WHY SHOULD THIS CHANGE BE IMPLEMENTED?

NCARB must have a certification model that acknowledges a foreign architect's competence to practice in their country of licensure. However, NCARB and its Member Boards should hold a higher value of their demonstration of competence earned through experience under the supervision of U.S. architects. Every Member Board expects competence at the point of initial licensure. Demonstrating competence to independently practice architecture in a U.S. environment is a basic element of our licensure requirements.

Further, NCARB Member Boards do not allow experience to be substituted for satisfaction of the examination requirement for any U.S. applicant for initial or reciprocal licensure. NCARB and its Member Boards should hold a higher value of their demonstration of competence earned through completion of the ARE. Demonstrating acquisition of knowledge and skills through examination to practice in a U.S. jurisdiction is a basic element of our licensure requirements.

Proposed Changes

Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA)

This proposal maintains that a foreign architect credential and U.S. experience warrants the reduction of the requirement for seven years of post-licensure foreign experience to two years in a foreign country or the United States. Completion of the ARE warrants the elimination of the experience dossier, dossier review, and interview.

RATIONALE

Current Program Requirements

Foreign architects applying for NCARB certification are given the opportunity to demonstrate competence to independently practice architecture, while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare, to meet the examination requirement of NCARB certification. Applicants for certification through the BEFA **do not document education, experience, or examination**. They demonstrate competence solely through projects represented in their Experience Dossier, relating their experience to the content areas of the ARE.

Foreign architects are eligible to apply for an NCARB Certificate through the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) Program if they:

1. Have **graduated with a recognized education credential** from an **officially recognized architecture program**, and
2. Are currently credentialed as an architect in a country other than the United States and Canada (NCARB provides certification for architects registered in Canada) that:
 - o Has a formal record keeping method for disciplinary actions for architects, and
3. Have completed a minimum of **seven years of comprehensive, unlimited practice as a credentialed architect** over which the applicant **exercised responsible control** in the foreign country where the applicant is credentialed

Applicants must prepare an ‘experience dossier,’ which is distinct from a professional portfolio of work in that it allows a foreign architect to demonstrate competence to practice architecture independently rather than documentation of registration and professional qualifications.

Proposed Changes

Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA)

The specific areas of the BEFA dossier require project documentation based on the content areas of the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®)

1. Programming, Planning, & Practice
2. Site Planning & Design
3. Building Design & Construction Systems
4. Schematic Design
5. Structural Systems
6. Building Systems
7. Construction Documents & Services

The dossier must include a detailed, written description of specific examples of experience as a credentialed architect and provide supporting documentation that is relevant to the experience areas. The projects included in the dossier must be completed projects located in the foreign country where the foreign architect is credentialed.

[Comprehensive practice](#) and [responsible control](#) must be clearly explained both in the written descriptions and in the supporting documentation. The applicant must also [describe the general nature of modifications necessary to comply with U.S. building codes and laws including accessibility laws](#).

***Comprehensive Practice** means an architectural practice that regularly involves [familiarity with all of those areas tested on the Architect Registration Examination](#), including programming, design, technical and construction documents production, and construction administration.*

***Responsible Control** means that amount of [control over](#) and [detailed professional knowledge](#) of the content of technical submissions during their preparation as is ordinarily exercised by a registered architect applying the required professional standard of care.*

Applicants must describe the general nature of modifications necessary to [comply with U.S. building codes and laws](#) including accessibility laws. Most applicants are currently working in the U.S.

Foreign Architects: Education, Experience, and Examination

Architecture education varies from country to country. Experience requirements vary, if required at all. Examination requirements vary also, if required at all. The following chart outlines typical requirements in many countries:

Proposed Changes Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA)



Applicants for the BEFA are required to have practiced in their country where credentialed for a minimum of seven years. Many foreign architects who have expressed interest in the BEFA program left their country of credentialed practice soon after they completed their country’s requirements, to settle in the U.S. Most of these individuals, working legally in the U.S. as “interns,” have years of experience working in a U.S. firm under the supervision of a U.S. architect. As noted above, applicants must annotate submitted documents to indicate the general nature of modifications necessary to comply with U.S. building codes and laws including accessibility laws. Because most applicants are currently working in the U.S, it seems more logical to allow, or require, documentation of experience developing buildings here in the U.S. under the supervision of a U.S. architect.

The Council has developed a number of programs over the years to address the different requirements in various countries. For example, the BEFA, the MRA with the European Union, and APEC Architect Project were all developed in parallel around the same time. The basis for eligibility in all three programs was similar and based on the numbers 14 and seven:

14 total years including formal education + training, leading to registration + practice; seven of which must be in certified, unlimited, post-registration practice.

Most recognized foreign education programs are five years long – similar in length to the NAAB-accredited Bachelor of Architecture. When the path to licensure was linear – Education + Experience + Examination – IDP was

Proposed Changes

Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA)

considered to take three years and the ARE was expected to take two years – a “ten year” unofficial path. The “12 year” unofficial path appears to be reflected by those member boards that utilize a system of education credits to qualify for initial and/or reciprocal licensure.

The project team acknowledges that there is no single consistent path in foreign countries, however the team’s research found there has been **no consistency in “how long” the path to licensure should be**. The project team **could not find** any official documentation to **support a requirement for seven years of practice** in a foreign country.

All Member Boards require successful completion of the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) by candidates applying for initial licensure. While some jurisdictions do allow additional experience to supplement education requirements, none allow experience as a substitute for the examination requirement. The **ARE is** viewed by the Member Boards as **‘the great equalizer,’ assessing a candidate’s acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills** to practice architecture independently. Further, the addition of the ARE requirement provides assurance as to familiarity with U.S. codes and facility with the English language.

NCARB must have a certification model that acknowledges a foreign architect’s competence to practice in their country of licensure. However, NCARB and its Member Boards should recognize the value of an applicant’s demonstration of competence earned through experience under the supervision of U.S. architects and completion of the ARE. Demonstrating experience in a U.S. environment and acquisition of knowledge and skills through examination are basic elements of our licensure requirements.

IMPETUS FOR STUDY

Years of pulsing you, our members, asking “why”, and challenging conventional wisdom are leading to sustainable change. Change that embraces “rigor for a reason,” rather than rigor for the sake of rigor. This approach has led to a discussion of proposed changes to the BEFA program that recognizes the rigor imposed by each member board in the reciprocal licensing of architects that ensures protection of the public’s health, safety, and welfare.

These proposed changes are designed to acknowledge each member boards’ responsibility to determine that an applicant for reciprocal licensure is competent to practice architecture independently. Feedback received in response to the request will be used to inform discussions by the Board of Directors at the September and December meetings.

Proposed Changes

Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program (BEFA)

Concerns that the BEFA program contains extensive requirements that are difficult for foreign architects to comprehensively understand; is overwhelmingly resource intensive to administer; and often takes architects significantly longer to complete than intended led to the formation of a multi-department special research team in August 2013. The team was tasked with thoroughly analyzing the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program and providing the NCARB Board of Directors with an in-depth analysis of options identifying ways to improve requirements for NCARB certification while ensuring the program is objective, attainable, sustainable, and defensible.

The multi-departmental research team was formed to ensure that diverse would be taken into consideration. In addition, leaders of the team engaged BEA and Education Committee members, foreign architects who have participated in the program, and foreign architects that would like to pursue certification in conversations on various requirements of the current program. The goal of these conversations was to garner feedback from key stakeholders that could assist the team in identifying the options that Member Boards and key stakeholders might feel most comfortable adopting.

An exhaustive review of historic decisions, interviews of key stakeholders, and the use of agile project management approaches has delivered proposals that preserve the rigor of BEFA but addresses elements which unnecessarily complicate the process of meeting the programs' goals. These changes can be characterized as a "course correction," mindful of the many years spent by volunteers in designing programs to address concerns of Member Boards. The Board of Directors enter into these iterations understanding that unanimous adoption will surely not happen immediately, and that some jurisdictions may prefer a more gradual implementation. The Board of Directors strongly feel that our work over several years of strategic planning, surveying, brainstorming, and consultation with Member Boards has laid the foundation for significant streamlining of programs and reflects the consensus of the Council's many stakeholders.