



Education Ave



LICENSE

Experience Ave



IDP

Experience Ave



ARE

Education Ave

Examination Ave



EDU

# DESTINATION: ARCHITECT

## PLANNING FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL ROAD TRIP

When embarking on a road trip, the thrill of the adventure is often discovering something you didn't expect along the way. On the flip side, coming across an unexpected detour, or getting lost, could make for a long, bad trip. Worst case, you won't reach your destination. Knowing when to stop and ask for directions can be the difference between a great adventure and a great frustration.

If your professional destination is to become an architect, then you need to be aware of certain waypoints—essential targets along the way. At each of these points, you want to be sure you understand the requirements, when to seek more information, and perhaps most importantly, where to seek more information. Evaluating this can be particularly tricky when it comes to NCARB and the 54 architectural registration boards that constitute NCARB's Member Boards—so where do you start?

### FIRST, GET YOUR BEARINGS

Understanding the difference between NCARB and the architectural registration boards that are the “members” of NCARB will help you understand who to ask when you have a question. The fact is that both NCARB and its Member Boards both exist to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare and both fulfill roles related to licensure. Understanding the different roles and when they actually overlap—can save time and keep you on track toward your ultimate destination.

Based in each of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the registration boards are the actual decision-makers by law. They are empowered by the states or territories in which they serve, and

they are the final authorities on who is authorized to practice architecture within their jurisdiction.

The registration board determines what standards to enforce in their jurisdiction in terms of education, experience, examination, licensure, reciprocity, and the practice of architecture. Each jurisdiction defines its own policies and procedures, and no two jurisdictions are identical. You must be licensed by a jurisdiction to practice architecture within that jurisdiction (a complete list is available at [www.ncarb.org/Reg-Board-Requirements](http://www.ncarb.org/Reg-Board-Requirements).)

NCARB is the nonprofit association serving the 54 architectural registration boards. The staff based in Washington, DC, with oversight from the NCARB Board of Directors, facilitates NCARB programs and leads the day-to-day operations.

NCARB has a variety of roles in the licensure process, including development and administration of the Intern Development Program (IDP), the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®), and NCARB certification. With nearly three million digital images in its holdings—records, transcripts, and correspondence—NCARB is also the official custodian of architectural records. It maintains secure, confidential, and comprehensive records for interns, architects, and registration boards. These records are managed and evaluated by NCARB and at various points in the licensure process and transmitted to the registration boards. One of the most important steps to licensure is to establish your NCARB Record.

*Need directions on establishing your NCARB Record? Ask NCARB.*

### MAP IT OUT

There are three essential components to licensure, they are: education, experience, and examination. Your path to licensure is defined by satisfying the requirements in these three areas as defined by the jurisdiction where you are seeking your initial license. Since it is the individual jurisdictions that actually issue you a license to practice, it is imperative that you understand the specific requirements of the jurisdiction in which you seek your initial license. The sequence in which you satisfy these requirements will be unique to your particular circumstance and your individual plan.

When determining your plan and timeline, it is important to consider the difference between seeking an initial license in a jurisdiction and seeking reciprocity to obtain a license in another jurisdiction. After all, you may be living and working on the east coast now, but dream of practicing in California one day, or vice versa. Requirements can and do vary from one jurisdiction to another, therefore a little planning goes a long way.

### ESTABLISH YOUR NCARB RECORD

Throughout your career, your Record becomes a detailed, verified record of your education and experience used to establish qualification for examination, licensure, and certification. Establishing a Record is essential for documenting the hours of experience required for the completion of the IDP. Your NCARB Record gives you access to the electronic Experience Verification Reporting (e-EVR) system for the timely and accurate reporting of your experience. It is also the first step for those seeking eligibility to take the ARE, or for foreign educated applicants who are having their education evaluated through the Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA).

Creating an NCARB Record is easy—just visit the NCARB web site, [www.ncarb.org](http://www.ncarb.org), and get started!

### START WITH NCARB

The NCARB web site, [www.ncarb.org](http://www.ncarb.org), features informational pages on each of the steps to licensure. Through the web site, there is access to the *Handbook for Interns and Architects*, and the *Education, IDP, and ARE Guidelines*. Additionally, there are numerous other resources available, including an extensive database of frequently asked questions, newsletters, and webcast presentations.

One of the most useful tools to help plan your way is literally a map. Available on the NCARB web site, under “Getting an Initial License,” you can click on the “big orange map.” This will bring you to a pull down menu where you can research requirements for initial licensure, reciprocal registration, registration renewal, and practice requirements for all of NCARB’s 54 jurisdictions. There is also access to contact information and web sites for each of the registration boards, as well as charts comparing requirements by jurisdictions. Requirements are subject to change, so you should confirm all requirements directly with your registration boards.

*Do you have questions about the specific requirements of a jurisdiction? Ask the jurisdiction ([www.ncarb.org/Reg-Board-Requirements](http://www.ncarb.org/Reg-Board-Requirements)).*

### EDUCATION

The primary means of satisfying most U.S. registration boards’ education requirements is earning a professional degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). NAAB is the only agency authorized to accredit architecture programs in the United States. A NAAB-accredited degree is also a requirement for an NCARB Certificate, which facilitates reciprocity between registration boards.

*Need help researching a NAAB accredited program? Check out [www.naab.org](http://www.naab.org).*

If you have an NAAB-accredited degree, or are in the process of completing one, the education component of licensure will be relatively straightforward for you, and will include documentation to NCARB of your completed professional degree.

*Need directions to document your education to NCARB? Ask NCARB.*



### ALTERNATE ROUTE?

If you do not have a NAAB-accredited degree, or you are foreign educated, there can be additional steps and questions along your path to licensure that you will need to address, particularly if you would like to become NCARB certified. Since each jurisdiction determines their own requirements for education, this is one point in the process when you may need to seek information from multiple resources. You will want to research the particular requirements of the jurisdiction in which you are seeking your initial license and understand the implications in terms of reciprocal registration in other jurisdictions.



## EXPERIENCE

The Intern Development Program (IDP) is the structured internship program developed and administered by NCARB. It is your comprehensive plan to ensure that you gain experience in all aspects of architectural practice such that you are prepared to practice architecture independently upon initial licensure.

The primary means of obtaining qualifying experience is through recognized work settings, although there are also opportunities to complete a significant amount of the required 5,600 hours through supplementary education. Supplementary education includes all of the opportunities to earn IDP credit outside of a traditional work setting, whether or not employed. Additionally under the new IDP eligibility dates, architecture students may be able to begin documenting IDP experience as early as their freshman year of architecture school, or in some cases even earlier. As a result, your experience timeline has some flexibility. That said, there are “rules of the road” that need to be followed, and qualifying IDP experience must be reported in a timely manner. As such, it is essential to be familiar with the program requirements. The *IDP Guidelines*, published by NCARB, is your comprehensive source for all things IDP.

*Need more information on IDP? Ask NCARB.*

At the time you begin your IDP, you do not necessarily need to know where you are seeking your initial license. In fact, many interns gain qualifying IDP experience in a variety of jurisdictions before

figuring out their path to licensure. That said, in addition to completing NCARB's IDP, you want to be aware of any jurisdictional specific requirements relative to your experience requirement. For example, some jurisdictions require that you document a certain number of years of experience—this is called a “duration” requirement.

*Need to understand your specific jurisdictional experience requirement? Ask your jurisdiction ([www.ncarb.org/Reg-Board-Requirements](http://www.ncarb.org/Reg-Board-Requirements)).*

## EXAMINATION

Developed by NCARB, the Architect Registration Examination (ARE) is required in all 54 jurisdictions. There are multiple resources available on the NCARB web site related to the ARE, including the *ARE Guidelines*, exam guides, and practice software for all of the graphic vignettes.

Your eligibility to test and when you can begin testing is determined by the requirements of the jurisdiction in which you are seeking your initial license.

Many jurisdictions allow you to begin testing after you have satisfied their education requirement and you have established your NCARB Record. This option to begin testing while still completing your experience requirement is referred to as “early eligibility.” A complete list of jurisdictions accepting early eligibility is available on the NCARB web site.

Although your ability to begin testing is determined by your jurisdiction's requirements—the actual process to become authorized to test may involve both NCARB and your jurisdiction, or in some cases, just NCARB.

Some jurisdictions prefer to manage their ARE candidates themselves, while others prefer that NCARB serve as an intermediary and manage that process for them. Interns who are ready to begin testing need to understand the difference and know which eligibility process their jurisdiction uses.

When NCARB manages the ARE process for a jurisdiction, it is through one of two programs: “Direct Registration” or “Direct Eligibility.” Nearly half of the 54 jurisdictions use one of these two programs to facilitate the ARE process. The remaining jurisdictions administer the process themselves. In all cases, you must have your Authorization to Test (ATT) before you are able to schedule a division and begin testing. If you are testing in a Direct Registration jurisdiction then your eligibilities and score reports are managed by NCARB. However, if you are testing in a jurisdiction participating in Direct Eligibility, then your Authorization to Test is processed by NCARB, but your score reports are managed by your jurisdiction [see page 10].

*Need more information on the ARE? Ask NCARB.*



**ARRIVE AT YOUR DESTINATION:  
Licensure & Certification**

Your application for licensure is submitted to and ultimately approved by your jurisdiction. The registration board will determine if you have met the requirements for licensure. In addition to the education, experience, and examination requirements, there may be additional jurisdictional requirements such as a requirement to provide professional references.

*Need more information on the application process for your jurisdiction? Ask your jurisdiction.*

More than half of the jurisdictions require an NCARB Certificate to seek reciprocity in their jurisdiction. Typical certification requirements include a NAAB-accredited degree, completion of the IDP, passing the ARE, and a valid license to practice in one of NCARB's 54 jurisdictions. The

NCARB Certificate affords the ability to seek work in additional jurisdictions in a timely manner.

Upon receiving your initial license to practice in your primary jurisdiction—notify NCARB. NCARB will in turn convert your NCARB Record status from intern to architect, and follow up with you if you are interested in seeking your NCARB Certificate.

An architect who has obtained an NCARB Certificate may use the letters “NCARB” after their name to indicate that they have achieved the credential. Firms who are hiring often view a certified architect as a more favored candidate because of the market flexibility that person potentially brings to the firm. Additionally, clients with interests in many states may prefer to hire architects who can quickly obtain registration in multiple states. NCARB Certificate holders receive discounts on NCARB's monographs and mini-mono-

graphs, which qualify for health, safety, and welfare continuing education credits (CEUs).

*Need more information on NCARB certification? Ask NCARB.*

Practicing architecture is an opportunity to influence the lives of others and enrich the built environment. Just as your skill set as an architect is unique, so is your path to becoming one. Getting to “architect” is a path of learning to ensure that you can practice architecture independently and can protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. The path is not meant to be easy—because the responsibility of an architect is great—however, arriving at your destination will be easier if you understand and utilize the resources available, and plan appropriately. **DC**

**ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ARE**

With an Authorization to Test (ATT), you are able to proceed with scheduling divisions of the exam. All scheduling and testing center administration is handled by Prometric, NCARB's testing consultant.

You must have an active NCARB Record and have fulfilled all of your jurisdiction's requirements, in order to initiate your request for your Authorization to Test. The first step is to log into “My NCARB Record” and request transmittal of your Record to the jurisdiction in which you are seeking your initial license. It is important to note that you may not need to be physically located in a jurisdiction in order to test there. There may be residency requirements for licensure.

The next steps will depend on whether or not the jurisdiction you are testing in manages the ARE process themselves, or if they utilize one of the NCARB services of Direct Registration or Direct Eligibility.

**ELIGIBILITY THROUGH YOUR JURISDICTION**

If your jurisdiction does not participate in Direct Registration or Direct Eligibility, then the process of obtaining an Authorization to Test involves initiating the process with both NCARB and your jurisdiction. You will request transmittal of your Record to the

jurisdiction through “My NCARB Record,” and follow up with the jurisdiction to complete any related application documents needed to initiate your Authorization to Test. Your Authorization to Test is processed by your jurisdiction.

After each division taken, your scores are sent by Prometric directly to your jurisdiction before being forwarded to you. Once all seven divisions are passed, your registration board makes a determination about granting licensure based on your completion of all other jurisdictional requirements, such as the IDP.

**DIRECT REGISTRATION**

The Direct Registration program is an NCARB service provided to the registration boards. For the boards who participate in the program, NCARB serves as an intermediary and manages all candidates' eligibility and score reporting processes. If you are getting your initial license in a state that is in the Direct Registration program, you should contact NCARB about your Authorization to Test.

Upon completion of each ARE division, the score is sent to NCARB by Prometric, added to the candidate's NCARB Record, and then forwarded to the candidate. Once the intern passes their final division and has completed

the IDP, NCARB notifies the jurisdiction. A candidate is then instructed to contact his or her jurisdiction to complete the jurisdiction's final licensure procedures.

Direct Registration is only available to jurisdictions that require that interns meet certain requirements regarding education and experience. If you are in a Direct Registration jurisdiction and do not meet these standards, you will need to contact the jurisdiction directly to request eligibility through alternative means, if available. If granted an Authorization to Test, then the jurisdiction—and not NCARB—will facilitate the process.

**DIRECT ELIGIBILITY**

For those boards participating in the Direct Eligibility program, NCARB's role is to facilitate your Authorization to Test. All other aspects of the process are managed by your jurisdiction, including the processing of your scores. Once you pass your final division, you will need to understand the steps to completing the licensing requirement in your jurisdiction. If you are getting your initial license in a jurisdiction that is in the Direct Eligibility program, you should contact NCARB about your Authorization to Test.