



# Your Guide to the AXP<sup>®</sup>

[ncarb.org/axp](https://ncarb.org/axp)



# Your Guide to the AXP

## The experience you need to practice architecture.

The path to licensure is designed to build your skills and ensure you can competently design buildings that protect the public health, safety, and welfare. A big part of that is making sure you get real-world experience for any scenarios you could face as an architect.

That's where the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) comes in. The AXP includes six broad experience areas that better reflect the current practice of architecture.

Want to learn more about the path to earning your license? Check out our guide to becoming an architect at [destinationarchitect.org](https://www.destinationarchitect.org).

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# Understanding the Basics

The AXP provides a framework to guide you through earning and recording your professional experience. The program covers everything from site design to project management and prepares you to practice architecture independently. Through the AXP, you'll:

- Learn about the daily realities of architectural practice
- Acquire comprehensive experience in basic practice areas
- Explore specialized areas of practice
- Develop professional judgment
- Refine your career goals

You can start reporting any experience gained after you have graduated from high school (or the equivalent). To complete the program, you'll need to demonstrate that you're able to competently perform the tasks identified across the six experience areas.

Keep in mind that each U.S. jurisdiction sets its own requirements for becoming an architect. While most accept the AXP, you should check with your jurisdiction to ensure you're getting the experience you need to earn your license.

For more information on the AXP,  
see our [AXP Guidelines](#)

# Experience Areas

The AXP identifies 96 tasks that fall into six practice areas:

- 1 Practice Management
- 3 Project Management
- 2 Programming & Analysis
- 4 Project Planning & Design
- 5 Project Development & Documentation
- 6 Construction & Evaluation

To demonstrate your ability to perform specific tasks, you'll need to report a minimum of 3,740 experience hours.

[More about Experience Areas →](#)

## Practice Management

 160 Required Hours

This experience area is where you'll gain experience running an architecture firm—including the ins and outs of managing a business, marketing your firm, securing projects, working with clients, and sustaining a positive and professional work environment.

## Project Management

 360 Required Hours

In Project Management, you'll learn how to deliver projects that meet your contractual requirements, so you'll be prepared to budget, coordinate, oversee, and execute a project.

## Programming & Analysis

 260 Required Hours

This is the first phase of a project, often referred to as pre-design. You'll experience tasks related to researching and evaluating client requirements, building code and zoning regulations, and site data to develop recommendations on the feasibility of a project.

## Project Planning & Design

 1,080 Required Hours

This experience area covers the schematic design phase of a project. You'll learn to layout the building design, review building codes and regulations, coordinate schematics with consultants, and communicate design concepts with your client.

## Project Development & Documentation

 1,520 Required Hours

Here, you'll gain experience with projects after the schematic design has been approved—focusing on construction documents and coordinating with regulatory authorities to gain the necessary approvals for construction.

## Construction & Evaluation

 360 Required Hours

In this experience area, you'll get involved with the construction administration and post-construction phases of a project—this includes being out on the job site; meeting with contractors, clients, and building officials; and punching lists, leading to the completion of your project.

# Experience Settings

Your AXP experience will fall under one of two experience settings: setting A or setting O. These settings identify the areas and opportunities where you can gain experience and help define the type of work you're doing, who you're working for, and who's overseeing your experience.



## Setting A: Architecture

This setting covers the experience you gain while employed by an architecture firm, working under an AXP supervisor who is licensed to practice architecture in the United States or Canada. In order to meet the AXP's requirements, you'll need to earn at least 1,860 hours in experience setting A.



**1,860**  
REQUIRED HOURS

## Setting O: Other Experience Opportunities

This setting covers everything else, including some experiences that can be performed for other licensed professionals or gained while unemployed. Flip to the next page to see what these opportunities include.



**NO MIN.**  
REQUIRED HOURS

Experience Setting O  
Opportunities →

# Experience Setting Opportunities

OPPORTUNITY	TYPE
Other Work Experience Under Licensed Professionals	Employment
Design or Construction Related Employment	Employment
Community-Based Design Center/Collaborative	Volunteer
CSI Certification: CCCA	Certification
CSI Certification: CCS	Certification
Design Competitions	See opportunity details
NCARB's Professional Conduct CE Series	Self-directed
Site Visit With Mentor	See opportunity details
Construction Work	Employment/Volunteer
AIA Continuing Education for HSW	See opportunity details

There is **no minimum number of hours** required for this experience setting, although many of the opportunities have a maximum limit.

WHO APPROVES	WHERE THE HOURS GO	HOURS
AXP Supervisor	Any AXP experience area	Up to 1,860 hours
AXP Supervisor	Any AXP experience area	Up to 320 hours
“Designated” AXP Supervisor	Any AXP experience area	Up to 320 hours
NCARB	Construction & Evaluation	40 hours
NCARB	Project Planning & Design	40 hours
Mentor	Any AXP experience area	Up to 320 hours
NCARB	Practice Management	Up to 10 hours
Mentor	Construction & Evaluation	Up to 40 hours
AXP Supervisor	Construction & Evaluation	Up to 320 hours
NCARB	Any AXP experience area	Up to 20 hours per area

# Reporting Your Experience

To log your experience in the AXP, you'll need three things:



**Experience**



**NCARB Record**



**Supervisor**  
(For Work Experience)

## Starting Your NCARB Record

To report AXP experience, you'll have to create an NCARB Record. Through your Record, you can:

- View your education
- Log your experience hours
- Track your Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) progress

Once you've completed your education, experience, and examination requirements, your jurisdiction will use your NCARB Record to verify that you're qualified for licensure.

You can start your NCARB Record in three simple steps:

- Go to [my.ncarb.org](https://my.ncarb.org)
- Click “Establish Record” to create your account
- Add an “NCARB Record” to your account

# Working With an AXP Supervisor

Different architecture firms will have different support systems for licensure candidates, so it's a good idea to ask for specifics during your interview. Finding an employer who understands the value of earning a license is crucial to your AXP progress.

Once you begin working in a firm, you'll be assigned an AXP supervisor. This is the person who maintains responsibility for your work, manages your daily work experience, and approves your experience reports. Before submitting your first report, meet with your supervisor to discuss reporting expectations, plan your progress through AXP, and review basic logistics—such as what email to use when submitting reports.

AXP supervisors are usually registered architects. However, in certain experience opportunities, your AXP supervisor may be a professional from another discipline.

## Finding an AXP Mentor

Your mentor is someone who's there to offer you instruction, encouragement, and advice as you navigate the path to licensure. This person may change throughout your career, but must always be licensed to practice architecture in either the United States or Canada in order to approve any of your qualified Setting O experience.

Mentors are not required as part of the AXP, but they can be helpful resources for you throughout your professional career.

# Reporting Experience

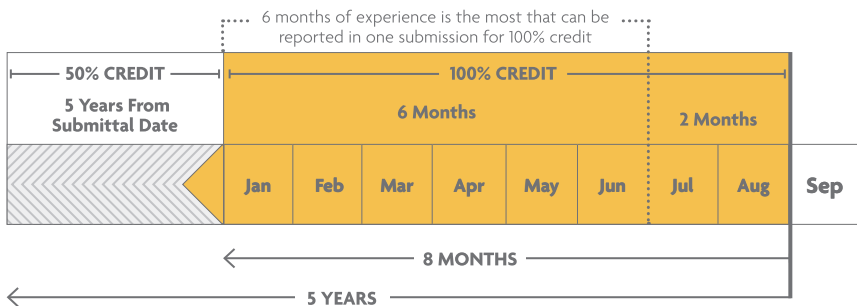
All your AXP experience must be logged and approved through your NCARB Record.

Once you start gaining qualified experience, you can report your hours online or through our My AXP mobile app—free for Apple and Android devices.

Each time you submit a report, your AXP supervisor receives an email notification with a link to review and approve your experience.

You must submit all experience within eight months of gaining it to receive full credit toward the AXP. Within that first eight months, the largest report you can submit is for a six-month time frame. For experience earned more than eight months in the past, you'll have up to five years to report and will receive half credit toward your AXP requirements. You are not limited to the six-month reporting block for half credit experience.

If you are experiencing extenuating life circumstances—such as a serious illness or the birth or adoption of child—you may qualify for a reasonable extension to the two-month filing period. For more information on the reporting requirements and extensions, visit our website.



# The AXP Portfolio

Individuals with more than five years of experience may be able to pursue licensure through our AXP Portfolio option.

For those who put licensure on hold due to career, personal, or economic decisions, this option offers an opportunity to satisfy experience requirements through an online portfolio. To qualify for the portfolio, you must:

- Have at least two years of experience from over five years ago
- Have a current supervisor who is a licensed architect and willing to attest to your knowledge and experience
- Be unable to finish documenting the AXP through hourly experience reports
- Maintain an active NCARB Record

*NCARB determines eligibility for the AXP Portfolio on an individual basis.*

Participants in the AXP Portfolio must demonstrate competency in each of the 96 AXP tasks through exhibits—documents, PDFs, images, or other files that can be associated with a specific task(s).

For more information on the  
AXP Portfolio, see our [AXP Guidelines](#)

# FAQs

## When can I start the AXP?

You can begin earning experience that qualifies for the AXP as soon as you've graduated high school or an established equivalent.

## What is an academic internship?

Many schools have programs where students are employed in firms as a part of their education. Any paid internship that is integrated into your academic program, whether as a requirement or an elective, is considered an academic internship. You can report any academic internships that meet the employment and other AXP requirements.

## What is the smallest denomination of hours I can enter in the online reporting system?

The smallest amount of hours the system will accept is .25 hours.

## I submitted my experience report online, but my supervisor didn't receive an email notice. Can it be resent?

First, please have your supervisor check their junk or spam filter. If the email is still missing, please contact NCARB Customer Service at 202-879-0520.



## What is the difference between “Saved,” “Submitted,” and “Approved” experience reports?

**“Saved”** experience reports are hours you have entered for a specific reporting period, but have not yet submitted to your AXP supervisor for approval. You may make changes to your “saved” experience at any time until you submit your report. These reports are still subject to the reporting requirement.

**“Submitted”** experience reports are hours you have submitted to your supervisor, but have not yet been approved. Reports in this status no longer need to worry about the reporting requirement. You may not make changes to an experience report once you have submitted it to your AXP supervisor for approval and certification of its accuracy.

**“Returned for Edits”** These are reports that have been returned for you to make updates before re-submitting them. Please review the notes in the returned report, or talk to your supervisor if you have any questions. Once you have made the requested updates or resolved the issues, click submit and the report will be returned to the supervisor or whomever approves the experience. These reports are not subject to the reporting requirement as well.

**“Approved”** experience reports are hours your supervisor has verified and are now included in your AXP hour totals. If you need to make adjustments to an experience report you have submitted for approval, you must have your supervisor select the “Return for Edits” option. This action will cause the experience report to be returned to you so you can correct and resubmit it.

## How does my AXP experience get verified in my NCARB Record?

First, when adding a new employer or experience report, you are asked to identify your AXP supervisor and enter their email address. (Note: please review the *AXP Guidelines* for information about identifying your AXP supervisor.) Verify which email your supervisor would like you to use. After you've entered the information for the experience report, click "submit," and an email will be sent to your AXP supervisor asking them to review your submission through the AXP Supervisor and Mentor service within their My NCARB account. If your AXP supervisor approves the submission, the report is added to your NCARB Record and the hours are added to your totals; if they select the "Return for Edits" option, the submission is returned to you for revision and resubmission.

## How long does it take for hours to appear in my Record after my supervisor has approved my experience?

Approved experience hours are immediately viewable in your AXP hour totals. You may need to log out of your NCARB Record and log back in for any update(s) to appear.

For more information about the AXP,  
read the *AXP Guidelines* or visit:



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And subscribe to the AXP Update: [ncarb.org/subscribe](http://ncarb.org/subscribe)

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards protects the public health, safety, and welfare by leading the regulation of the practice of architecture through the development and application of standards for licensure and credentialing of architects.



NCARB

LET'S GO FURTHER

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