Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure

Proposal Requirements

CONTACT INFORMATION

Harry M. Falconer, Jr., FAIA, NCARB

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards

1801 K Street NW, Suite 700K

Washington, DC 20006

202-454-2235

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ipal@ncarb.org

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INTRODUCTION

Background

While the path to architectural licensure varies based on the individual's approach and jurisdiction requirements, it is generally based on national standards facilitated by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). The three components of initial licensure—education, experience, and examination—are recognized standards accepted by all 54 U.S. architect licensing boards. NCARB, along with its collateral organizations, is continuously reviewing, evaluating, and updating the requirements based on changes in the profession.

Following several years of programmatic and proposed regulatory changes initiated by NCARB on behalf of the state and territorial boards, the licensure path has evolved. The feasibility of a complete overlap of the education, experience, and examination components has been a topic of speculation for many years. Students' focus on earning a license upon or shortly after graduation has created much interest in an interwoven model encompassing these three components.

The NCARB Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) initiative signals that our mission of creating programs to protect the public does not need to be rigidly focused on a fixed timeline. Arguably, the architect's tradition of life-long learning and development will be jump-started by this additional path.

This option represents NCARB's response to the ever-evolving pathways to licensure and our support of a more diverse and inclusive profession. We will continue to encourage every architecture student to seriously consider licensure and continue to argue for removing unnecessary impediments. NCARB will also continue to explore new ways to make this goal more achievable without sacrificing the necessary rigor.

The Licensure Components

The American model for licensing architects, referred to as the "path to licensure," has historically incorporated three key components: education, experience, and examination. *Education* serves to introduce the student to design thinking, basic historic and theoretical concepts, and the fundamentals of integrated design. *Experience* serves to provide the professional and business context for the licensure candidate through paid work experience and the reporting of hours spent developing competency in subject-specific tasks under the supervision of licensed professionals. *Examination* affirms that the candidate, through a blend of education and experience, is manifesting the level of comprehension that demonstrates competency to practice independently.

Over time, the regulatory aspects of these three components have evolved as well. Today, candidates can pursue experience through the Architectural Experience Program™ (AXP™) while simultaneously earning a degree. Candidates can begin reporting experience upon graduating from high school. In most jurisdictions, candidates can begin taking divisions of the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) while completing the AXP. With concurrency available for education/experience and experience/examination, the licensure path now moves toward a complete integration of the education, experience, and examination components.

Implementation Through Facilitation, Coaching, and Partnership

NCARB believes that providing an opportunity for students to pursue an integrated, structured path to licensure adds great opportunity and value to the licensing process. We recognize that many students will prefer the traditional path to licensure. Institutions choosing to offer the integrated path option may do so alongside the traditional path. This initiative is about providing choices for licensure candidates rather than mandating academic curriculum. Interweaving the components of licensure requires a focused and sustained initiative. Thus, NCARB frames the approach and incorporates pre-graduation access to the ARE through the partnership and cooperation of interested accredited programs and jurisdictional licensing boards. With coaching and facilitation by NCARB, this partnership between academia, practitioners, and regulators yields a rich option for an integrated path to licensure.

This partnership requires several elements to maximize success:

- Closer ties between the academy and jurisdictional licensing boards to continue the discussion regarding pre-graduation access to the ARE, with the added assistance of advocates within the academy and practice to address potential legislative impediments.

- A dialogue between the academy and practitioners, designing a pipeline for students to obtain paid work experience either near campus and/or via alumni networks in other locations. This requires a richer and more sustainable relationship between firms/practitioners and the academic institution given the intense rigor of obtaining AXP credit in a timely fashion.

- Re-establishment of an exam preparation culture, stimulated by a concentrated approach to examination.

These partnership activities can lead to some obvious and immediate benefits:

- Strengthened alumni relationships at architecture schools.

- Utilization of organizations such as the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) to organize focused efforts toward exam preparation and advocacy toward pre-graduation exam access.

Value to the Student, the Academy, the Profession, and the Public

The IPAL initiative delivers significant value to all parties, including the profession, students, and the institution. The current timeline from enrollment to licensure has a direct impact on lower wages and the ability to address student debt, as well as the diversity of licensees. The lag time to achieve licensure is believed to negatively impact those who began their path at a disadvantage based on demographics or economic station, or who are deterred by intervening circumstances.

Interweaving and integrating education and experience arguably enhances each component, with the classroom informing the workplace and vice versa. The immediacy of this integrated experience should result in better preparation for the examination. ARE 5.0 features six divisions that align to the experience areas required by the AXP, which are structured to more closely reflect the phases of practice. In addition, NCARB has eliminated the requirement to complete "elective" hours. This integrated approach can create a richer preparation for practice that is reinforced by a more contemporary exam.

Licensure preparation is under scrutiny in a variety of professions, including law, medicine, and architecture. Those who pay tuition and fees (parents as well as students), those who regulate professional licensure, and the citizens who oversee the process through their governmental institutions and taxpayer dollars are all taking a fresh look at what is essential and what may be superfluous. Academic institutions are pressed to demonstrate the success rate of their graduates. The architecture profession desires a greater degree of sophistication and mastery of emerging technology. Renewed interest in design concepts and an improved economic landscape are pressuring firms to hire more talent. Placing individuals into the marketplace in their 20s rather than their 30s can only maximize career opportunities. In the end, the lifelong learning of the architect does not artificially start before or after licensure; rather, licensure positions one to move to the next level.

Setting Appropriate Expectations

Participating in an IPAL option is not for every school or every student. NCARB acknowledges that participation will be open-ended, renewing annually as adjustments are made to the initiative and institutions take whatever time they need to develop an approach or become comfortable with the concept. Monitoring progress, tracking data, and sharing "best practices" is essential.

Success will be defined by those who move into architectural practice without years of post-graduation experience and examination, along with prolonged lower wages and delayed dreams. Additional success may come from discoveries made jointly by all partners regarding the viability of existing licensure elements, and by tracking how the future direction of licensure evolves.

This initiative is not about replacing the existing multiple paths to licensure, nor NCARB controlling curriculum or mandating participation. Our hope is to continue to enhance the path to licensure and uphold the ideals of the profession by creating new opportunities.

NCARB welcomes your engagement, respects your comments, and seeks to maintain an ongoing dialogue with all who support the Council's strategic goal of facilitating licensure.

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

Schedule
NCARB will accept and consider proposals from schools that wish to develop an integrated path option within their accredited architecture program at any time. This flexible schedule will give programs that may require additional resources and/or consideration the time necessary to develop a proposal. This will also provide greater opportunity for programs that are candidates for NAAB-accreditation to participate.

Proposal Format
Proposals must be submitted using the **IPAL Proposal Form** ⤤ and should be emailed in PDF format to **ipal@ncarb.org** ✉. The file size shall not exceed 10MB. Incomplete proposals may not be considered.

Questions
NCARB is committed to providing continuous coaching and feedback to all interested programs. Questions should be directed to Harry Falconer, Director, Experience + Education, at **ipal@ncarb.org** ✉.

Funding
Creating a proposal for an integrated path to licensure is voluntary. NCARB is unable to provide any grants or funding for the development of proposals. Further, NCARB is unable to provide grants or funding for accepted IPAL options or any elements thereof. Programs providing an NCARB-accepted Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) option are not eligible to apply for an NCARB Award in support of the option or elements therein.

NAAB Student Performance Criteria
The curriculum in your proposal should be based on the Student Performance Criteria as published in *NAAB's 2014 Conditions for Accreditation*. The current Conditions may be found on the **NAAB website** ⤤.

Architectural Experience Program™ (AXP™)
It is important to review the *AXP Guidelines* ⤤ to ensure your proposed program will provide students with the opportunity to satisfy the requirements of the AXP. Experience opportunities provided by your program must meet the current programmatic requirements for developing competency in performing the tasks identified and satisfying the required hours. New studios and related coursework developed to simulate or substitute for work experience do not qualify under the work setting requirements of AXP and will not be accepted. Additional information may be found on the **NCARB website** ⤤.

Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®)

The newest version of the exam, ARE 5.0, launched in November 2016. Students enrolled in IPAL initiatives must test in ARE 5.0. Therefore, your proposal should integrate the new six-division format of ARE 5.0 and identify appropriate opportunities for students to begin taking the exam. Additional information may be found on the NCARB website ⌤.

Experience Compensation

The American Institute of Architecture Students *Policy on Internship Compensation* ⌤ supports the moral and legal requirements of fair compensation for licensure candidates in the workplace. The AIA and the ACSA have both endorsed this policy. Firms and practitioners supporting your proposal are expected to comply with the conditions of the policy.

Modifying Laws and Rules

Many jurisdictional licensing boards will be required to modify their current laws and/or board rules in order to accept pre-graduation completion of ARE divisions for initial and/or reciprocal licensure. While each individual board is responsible for enacting these changes, the influence of your institution and the grassroots support of practitioners in your jurisdiction will be key in affecting change. NCARB is fully committed to partnering with institutions to provide necessary resources to assist licensing boards in their efforts to enact these changes.

NCARB is granting eligibility to sit for the ARE for those students who have been identified in an accepted IPAL initiative. Students participating in IPAL options will identify the jurisdiction they wish to pursue initial licensure when they complete the degree curriculum, experience requirement, and the examination. This process now allows any school to develop an IPAL option within their accredited program, regardless of the requirements of the jurisdiction where the school is located.

Statement of Fairness and Transparency

NCARB and its Education Committee are committed to a fair, transparent, efficient, effective, and non-discriminatory evaluation process.

SECTION II – PROPOSAL FORM

A. Proposal Form

Please provide your proposal using the IPAL Proposal Form ⌤ *only.*

SECTION III – PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation Criteria

NCARB's Education Committee (composed of practitioners, NCARB Member Board representatives, and collateral representatives) will evaluate all proposals to ensure compliance with the following submission requirements:

1. Maintenance of the program's NAAB accreditation.

2. Integration of paid work experience that will allow students to develop competency to perform the tasks identified in the AXP and document the 3,740 hours required by AXP. The proposed initiative must demonstrate that students enrolled have the opportunity to complete AXP prior to graduation.

3. Ability to provide access to each division of the ARE 5.0 to enrolled students at least one time prior to graduation.

Selection Process

NCARB's Education Committee will evaluate all proposals and will identify those accepted to implement their architecture program's proposed IPAL option as an "NCARB-accepted Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure."

1. There is no limit to the number of programs that will be accepted by NCARB to provide Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure options in their accredited degree program.

2. Programs will be notified of their acceptance in a timely manner after completion of the committee review, coaching by NCARB staff, and any required modifications to the proposal have been satisfactorily addressed.

3. NCARB will only accept those proposed program options satisfying the evaluation criteria identified above.

4. NCARB will work with the successful programs to assist with the modifications to regulations by the state registration board.

Additional Requirements for Accepted Programs

In order to monitor student participation and progress in NCARB's AXP and ARE and to facilitate eligibilities to sit for ARE divisions, each program will be asked to provide:

1. Identification of an IPAL advisor and a secondary contact at the school.

2. Identification of students enrolled in the IPAL initiative every semester (quarter, trimester, or equivalent.)

3. Student AXP/ARE participation Release of Information forms.

4. An annual update to include the following (NCARB is currently developing a standardized reporting tool):

    a. Program self-evaluation.

    b. Firm participation update including information on the mechanism used to place students in qualified internships.

    c. Progress of students enrolled.

d.   AXP experience reporting summaries (provided by NCARB).

e.   ARE attempts and pass rates (provided by NCARB).

f.   Program or curricular modifications or proposals to alter compliance with initial approval agreement.

g.   Status of NAAB accreditation for the program.

h.   Licensure board collaboration update.

Additional Links

- [Summary of ARE Eligibility Requirements by Jurisdiction](#) ⧉

- [Licensing Board Contact Information](#) ⧉

- [NAAB](#) ⧉

- [AXP](#) ⧉

- [ARE](#) ⧉