

NCARB Board Policy: Interim Guidance on Multiple Paths for Initial Architectural Licensure

January 2024

NCARB Board Policy: Interim Guidance on Multiple Paths for Initial Architectural Licensure

January 2024

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| Background..... | 2 |
| The Need for Additional Guidance | 3 |
| Interim Guidance..... | 3 |
| The Rationale..... | 4 |
| Assistance to interested Member Boards..... | 4 |
| Implementation Procedures | |
| <i>BACHELOR'S DEGREE (4-year)</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE (2-year).....</i> | <i>6</i> |
| <i>No Degree (some or no post-secondary education/unrelated degree).....</i> | <i>6</i> |

Background

Over the past several years, NCARB has been developing and advocating for multiple paths to architectural licensure. For architects, the education component of licensure via a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) is the most often utilized path. However, 17 jurisdictions do not require a NAAB-accredited degree program for initial licensure and roughly 15% of architects –over 18,000 people -- achieved licensure through other pathways.

While the NAAB-accredited degree program path represents the most commonly accepted pathway, we are committed to recognizing other paths as part of a ‘multiple paths’ to licensure as an architect. This effort is imperative to provide options for demonstrating the necessary competency to practice architecture with the potential to reduce candidates’ costs, eliminate the social and fiscal impediments attached to a single path, and improve access to the profession for traditionally underrepresented groups.

The Need for Additional Guidance

Several of NCARB's member boards have responded to this evolving need by working to reform their licensure frameworks to be more inclusive of differing education backgrounds. For over two decades, NCARB has delivered a rigorous approach to multiple paths for *post-licensure* reciprocity via our Certificate program. Further, NCARB is currently engaged in a multi-year effort to evolve the licensure framework to be more inclusive and competency based.

Until this effort is complete, however, the Council finds itself in the position of not having a robust recommendation in our current model documents for how a jurisdiction could implement an appropriate initial licensure path independent of an accredited degree.

Interim Guidance

Therefore, after research by the NCARB staff, the NCARB Board of Directors has developed a recommended approach for various academic education degrees that jurisdictions interested in broadening their paths for initial licensure could utilize. The interim policy guidance is provided in more detail in the addendum, but in brief, the recommended approach for non-NAAB degree holders is as follows:

- **Complete the NCARB Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) twice if a candidate has a degree from a 4-year bachelor degree program that includes at least 60 semester credit hours in architecture-related subjects*.**
- **Complete the AXP three times if a candidate has a degree from a 2-year associate degree program that includes at least 30 credit hours of coursework in architecture-related subjects*.**
- **Complete the AXP four times if a candidate has a high school degree or an established equivalent but does not have a relevant post-secondary academic education.**

To complete each multiple of the AXP, the candidate must meet the full program requirements for each multiple as defined in the AXP Guidelines. For example, if a candidate is completing four times the AXP, they must document the required number of hours in each experience area four times. Minimum and maximum hours in each experience setting still apply.

** Only courses NCARB considers "architecture-related" will be counted toward educational attainment for this path. The determination of whether post-secondary courses are considered "architecture-related subjects" follows the same process as "significant coursework in architecture, as determined by NCARB" as referenced in the NCARB Certification Guidelines in the Education Alternatives section.*

The Rationale

This model framework rests on the foundation of NCARB's established experience and certification programs and education standard. Basing this guidance on the AXP ensures the candidate is gaining relevant work experience to the practice of architecture.

AXP identifies the:

- Ninety-six specific tasks* over six experience areas.
- Defines the types of experiences that qualify for AXP and sets limits for experience gained outside of the practice of architecture.
- Sets the required experience hours documenting the candidate's development of competency for each experience area totaling 3,740 hours.

*These tasks were established by the 2012 Practice Analysis of Architecture as the key items a licensure candidate should be capable of performing to practice architecture independently. Requiring multiples of AXP allows for additional knowledge, skills, and abilities to be gained and strengthened over time through professional practice in lieu of academic education. And allowing candidates to begin taking divisions of the ARE without a degree and before completing AXP also allows additional flexibility.

This approach is straightforward and clear, ensures candidates are required to develop competence to practice architecture, and provides interested Member Boards with a credible assessment option. It is also a proposal that can be practically implemented by a Member Board in partnership with NCARB and provides a bridge to the holistic evolution of our competency framework that may move forward in the years ahead.

Assistance to interested Member Boards

To facilitate implementation by Member Boards interested in pursuing this option, NCARB will evaluate the post-secondary education backgrounds of initial licensure candidates to determine which path they are eligible to pursue. This determination will follow the same procedures currently used for the Certification Education Alternatives, which is based on total credit hours of "significant coursework in architecture as determined by NCARB." The Council will also provide technical assistance if a board is interested in pursuing statutory or regulatory changes. NCARB will also continue to manage the AXP program, including the additional documentation of experience required under this path. To assist candidates pursuing a licensure path using multiple of AXP, NCARB will require AXP to be completed based on the rules of the current program which includes the reporting requirements (8-month limitation of receiving full credit and 5-year limit on receiving any credit) if documenting hours or the portfolio method. The reporting requirement rule will be waived for the 2nd, 3rd or 4th multiples.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR INITIAL LICENSURE: MULTIPLE PATHS FRAMEWORK

EDUCATION: BACHELOR'S DEGREE (4-year)

A program that includes significant architecture coursework

- Hold a bachelor's degree that includes significant coursework in architecture, as determined by NCARB.
 - The degree was awarded after earning less than 150 semester credits or quarter hour equivalent.
 - The program must include at least 60 semester credit hours (90 quarter hours) of architecture coursework in the degree program major.
- The program must be offered at an institution with U.S. regional accreditation or the Canadian equivalent.

EXPERIENCE:

Complete and document the NCARB Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) two times.

This option requires completing the entire AXP twice, including but not limited to, minimum and maximum requirements in experience areas and experience settings. To complete two times the AXP, the candidate must meet the full program requirements as defined in the AXP Guidelines twice. For example, a candidate must document the required number of hours in each experience area two times.

EXAMINATION:

Pass all divisions of the NCARB Architect Registration Examination consistent with the score validity policy.

EDUCATION: ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE (2-year)**A program that includes significant architecture coursework**

- Hold an Associate's degree that includes significant coursework in architecture as determined by NCARB,
 - The program must include 30 semester credit hours (45 quarter hours) of architecture-related coursework in the degree program major.
- The program must be offered at an institution with U.S. regional accreditation (or the Canadian equivalent).

EXPERIENCE:**Complete and document the NCARB AXP three times.**

This option requires completing the entire AXP three times, including but not limited to, minimum and maximum requirements in experience areas and experience settings times. To complete three times the AXP, the candidate must meet the full program requirements as defined in the AXP Guidelines three times. For example, a candidate must document the required number of hours in each experience area three times.

EXAMINATION:

Pass all divisions of the NCARB Architect Registration Examination consistent with the score validity policy.

EDUCATION: NO ARCHITECTURE-RELATED DEGREE

Some or no post-secondary education, or an unrelated degree. Has a high school degree or an established equivalent but does not have a relevant post-secondary academic education.

EXPERIENCE:**Complete and document the AXP four times:**

This option requires completing the entire AXP four times, including but not limited to, minimum and maximum requirements in experience areas and experience settings four times. To complete four times the AXP, the candidate must meet the full program requirements as defined in the AXP Guidelines four times. For example, a candidate must document the required number of hours in each experience area four times.

EXAMINATION:

Pass all divisions of the NCARB Architect Registration Examination consistent with the score validity policy.