

# NCARB Certification: A Necessary Credential for Architects

The regulatory entities for the design professions have long grappled with two primary objectives: encourage and promote interstate practice opportunities while concurrently protecting the public health, safety, and welfare.

As a means to promote architectural registration while also protecting the public welfare, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards administers a certification program that facilitates reciprocal registration among its 55 member jurisdictions (also known as member boards). Qualified registered architects who hold the NCARB Certificate often can seamlessly respond to business opportunities in other states. Additionally, many jurisdictions require NCARB certification from non-resident architects.

Certification also can be used to support an application for registration in all Canadian provinces and in other countries, including Australia, China, and the Czech Republic.

It is important, however, to remember that certification is not registration; the NCARB Certificate does not qualify a person to practice architecture in a given jurisdiction. Registration and certification are separate processes.

## WHY CERTIFICATION?

During fiscal year 2004-2005, the number of registered architects seeking certification increased by 2.3 percent; there are now 35,761 Certificate holders in the United States. Why have so many professionals

sought out certification? Holding the NCARB Certificate

- Demonstrates an architect's effort and willingness to meet the highest professional standards established by registration boards responsible for public health, safety, and welfare.
- Often streamlines the registration process by allowing architects to apply in other U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions without re-submitting credentials.
- Distinguishes the architect among his/her peers, a factor that many firms consider when making hiring decisions.

## MEETING THE STANDARDS OF CERTIFICATION

A candidate for certification must meet four standards:

- Earn a professional degree from an NAAB-accredited or CACB-accredited program (or complete the Broadly Experienced Architect [BEA] process).
- Satisfy the Intern Development Program (IDP) requirements.
- Pass the Architect Registration Examination (ARE).
- Receive a license from one of NCARB's 55 member boards.

## THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Applying for the NCARB Certificate involves an extended but critical qualification process that can require several weeks to validate reported information. The document review phase usually requires six to eight weeks

and is followed by a final review of an applicant's qualifications.

Ultimately, the length of time necessary to process NCARB certification applications ensures reliability in the evaluation of candidate qualifications. Among architects seeking certification, 85 percent qualify for the NCARB Certificate.

## LONG-TERM BENEFITS DEFINE CERTIFICATION

In its purest sense, architecture is a profession without boundaries. More often than not, architects will seek practice opportunities beyond their licensed jurisdictions.

According to a recent NCARB survey, architects are registered in at least two different jurisdictions on average. The ability to practice in multiple jurisdictions—simultaneously—is more important than ever because it creates more opportunities, which can lead to potentially increased earnings.

Upon obtaining the Certificate, architects are broadly recognized as experts and leaders in the profession. For architects seeking career advancement or starting a new job search, certification is an excellent way to enhance their marketability—now and in the future.

For more information about certification, contact NCARB at 202/783-6500 or visit the Council web site ([www.ncarb.org/certification/index.html](http://www.ncarb.org/certification/index.html)). **DC**

### The Six Steps to Certification

- Download an Application for Council Record from the NCARB web site ([www.ncarb.org/Forms/index.html](http://www.ncarb.org/Forms/index.html)).
- Submit application and \$300 record compilation fee to NCARB.
- NCARB responds with instructions and forms for your use in verifying education and training. (NCARB contacts the jurisdiction[s] where you are registered for your current status and examination scores.)
- Complete your portion of the forms and forward them to your verification sources (employers, schools, etc.) who will return them directly to NCARB.
- When all requested information has been received, your qualifications will be evaluated. If eligible, you will be notified and asked to update your experience record and pay the \$155 certification fee.
- You will be issued your Certificate when NCARB receives your payment and employment update.

**Save \$\$\$ Now! The Council Record compilation fee for registered architects seeking certification is increasing to \$500 as of July 1, 2006. Send in your application by July 31st and you will only be charged the current \$300 fee!**

**DIRECT CONNECTION: A PUBLICATION OF NCARB**