

## The ABC's of the BEA and BEFA Programs Recognizing the Value of Experience

The Broadly Experienced Architect (BEA) program and the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) program have been established to meet the specific needs of architects who do not qualify for the NCARB Certificate under conventional circumstances.

## BEA BASICS

### Defining a “Broadly Experienced Architect”

Typically, a broadly experienced architect is registered in the United States and does not hold a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). He/she, however, has verifiable, comprehensive architectural experience as a registered architect over a specific number of years, depending on his/her level of post-secondary education.

In order to meet this requirement, an architect’s comprehensive experience must have taken place in the state in which he/she is registered to practice. If this is not the case, the comprehensive experience must have taken place under the supervision of an architect registered in that same jurisdiction.

NCARB has determined the required number of years of comprehensive experience as follows:

- With a pre-professional degree in architecture that is a component of an NAAB-accredited, CACB-accredited, or CACB-certified professional degree program, an architect must demonstrate **SIX YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.**
- With any other baccalaureate or higher degree, an architect must demonstrate **EIGHT YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.**
- With a high school diploma and no post-secondary degree, an architect must demonstrate **TEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.**

### Beginning the BEA Process

In order to begin the BEA process, a candidate must apply for an NCARB Council Record/Certificate. Once the application has been accepted and his/her BEA eligibility has been determined, the candidate will obtain an EESA-NCARB evaluation of his/her education—if he/she has earned at least 64 semester hours of post-secondary education.

EESA (Education Evaluation Services for Architects) evaluations are administered by NAAB, which also accredits programs in architecture as noted above. (NAAB charges a sep-

arate fee for this service.) This evaluation compares a candidate’s education with NCARB’s education requirements. Basically, the EESA evaluation identifies a candidate’s education deficiencies.

If a candidate has less than 64 semester hours of post-secondary education, an EESA evaluation is not required; however, such individuals must prepare a dossier that demonstrates learning in all subject areas identified in the NCARB education requirements.

### Review and Interview

Three members of NCARB’s Broadly Experienced Architect Committee will review a candidate’s dossier and will draft written reports for their fellow committee members. Based on this feedback, the committee must come to consensus at its next scheduled meeting as to whether or not a candidate has demonstrated the required learning.

A candidate who has demonstrated the required learning is invited to an interview, which takes place during the committee’s subsequent meeting. Three committee members conduct the interview with the goal of verifying the material and content presented in the candidate’s dossier. (NCARB charges a \$750 fee for the BEA interview.)

A candidate who successfully completes the interview stage will receive the NCARB Certificate, assuming all other requirements have been met.

Some candidate dossiers do not demonstrate the required learning. These candidates are given the option to reapply for the BEA program after acquiring additional comprehensive experience. For a reapplication received within six months of NCARB’s decision, the dossier submittal fee is reduced to \$500.

### Time Commitment

It usually takes between nine months and one year to complete the BEA process. NAAB requires three months to perform an EESA evaluation, and the BEA Committee meets three times per year at approximately

**BEFA BASICS**

**Defining a “Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect”**

As defined by NCARB guidelines, a “broadly experienced foreign architect”

- is an individual who holds a current registration, license, or certificate in good standing in a country other than the United States or Canada allowing him/her to engage in the unlimited practice of architecture (defined as the ability to provide any architectural services on any type of building), and
- is credentialed in a country that NCARB determines offers reasonable reciprocal credentialing opportunities for U.S. architects.

**Ascertaining Eligibility**

A foreign architect must demonstrate his/her eligibility as follows:

- The architect must describe the process by which he/she was credentialed or must submit information describing the credentialing process from the authority that granted the credential;
- The architect must hold a professional degree in architecture from an accredited/validated/officially recognized architecture program.
- The architect must have completed a minimum of seven years of comprehensive practice over which he/she exercised responsible control in the foreign country in which he/she is credentialed; and

- The architect must be credentialed in a foreign country that has a formal record-keeping mechanism for disciplinary actions in the practice of architecture.

**The Application Process:**

**Dossier and Interview**

Like a BEA candidate, a foreign architect seeking NCARB certification through the BEFA program must apply for a Council Record. After completing the Council Record application process and confirming initial eligibility, a BEFA candidate compiles a dossier, which will be reviewed by an NCARB committee.

The dossier should provide evidence that the BEFA candidate has practiced architecture for the required seven years in his/her home country. It also should demonstrate his/her competency to independently practice architecture in the U.S. (NCARB charges a \$2,200 fee for the BEFA dossier review.)

Again, the BEFA process is similar to its BEA counterpart. The dossier is reviewed by three NCARB committee members, who report their findings in writing to the other committee members. If a candidate’s dossier meets all requirements, based on the information gathered by the committee members, he/she will be invited for an interview at the committee’s next meeting. The interview will be conducted in English without a translator. (NCARB charges a \$750 fee for the BEFA interview.)

The purpose of the interview is to verify a BEFA candidate’s

- responsibility over the development, management, and implementation of each submitted project;
- understanding of U.S. licensing and professional conduct requirements; and
- knowledge of U.S. building codes and laws.

After the interview, the BEFA candidate will be notified of the committee’s decision. If successful, he/she will receive the NCARB Certificate, assuming all other requirements have been met.

**Time Commitment**

It usually takes between nine months and one year to complete the BEFA process.

**NOTE: A few states do not yet accept for reciprocity the NCARB Certificate that is based on the BEA and BEFA programs. Please contact individual boards for their latest requirements. Board contact information can be found on the NCARB web site ([www.ncarb.org/stateboards/index.html](http://www.ncarb.org/stateboards/index.html)).**

*For more information about the Broadly Experienced Architect and Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect programs, please contact Michiel Bourdrez, AIA, ([mbourdrez@ncarb.org](mailto:mbourdrez@ncarb.org)) or Demetrius Norman (202/879-0528 and [dnorman@ncarb.org](mailto:dnorman@ncarb.org)), or visit the NCARB web site ([www.ncarb.org/certification/index.html](http://www.ncarb.org/certification/index.html)). DC*

**Related Fees**

Council Record Application	\$500
NAAB-EESA Evaluation	\$900
NAAB-EESA Reconsideration	\$200
<i>An appeal of the NAAB-EESA evaluation is free; each candidate is limited to one appeal.</i>	

BEA Dossier Review	\$1,000
BEA Interview	\$750 (per interview)
BEFA Dossier Review	\$2,200
BEFA Interview	\$750 (per interview)
Certification	\$155
Annual Certificate Renewal	\$150

**Related Acronyms**

BEA	Broadly Experienced Architect
BEFA	Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect
EESA	Education Evaluation Services for Architects
NAAB	National Architectural Accrediting Board
NCARB	National Council of Architectural Registration Boards