

Foreign architects who have demonstrated seven years of comprehensive practice in their home country as a registered/certified/accredited architect may be eligible for NCARB certification through the Broadly Experienced Architect Program.

The BEFA Path To Certification

In 2005 NCARB established the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) program to provide a way for architects educated and registered in countries other than the United States and Canada to receive NCARB certification. The BEFA program is a multi-stage process that involves:

1. ELIGIBILITY

BEFA eligibility requirements include:

- A professional degree in architecture from an accredited/validated/officially recognized architecture program;
- Unrestricted registration as a credentialed architect;
- A minimum of seven years of comprehensive unrestricted practice as a credentialed architect in the country in which the candidate is credential with responsible control for projects; and

Eligibility also requires that candidates provide a description of the credentialing process. Registration as a credentialed architect must be in a country that has a formal record-keeping mechanism for disciplinary actions in the practice of architecture.

2. APPLICATION

The application process includes:

- Establishment of a NCARB Record including all required documents; and
- Submission of a BEFA Eligibility Form.

Both forms are available online; NCARB Record application (www.ncarb.org/RecordApp/recordsvc/login.aspx) and

BEFA Eligibility form (www.ncarb.org/forms/form262.pdf). Fees for each application are also outlined on the NCARB web site (www.ncarb.org/forms/fees.html).

3. DOSSIER OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

After completion of the NCARB Record, submission of the BEFA Eligibility form, and confirmation of eligibility, the BEFA applicant will be requested to prepare and submit a BEFA Dossier. NCARB will provide a detailed description of the required dossier format and instructions for submission of the dossier. The dossier must include:

- A resume outlining the applicant's comprehensive practice and a list of significant projects over which the applicant exercised responsible control;
- Demonstration of competence to independently practice architecture, while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare;
- Drawings, photographs, construction documents and descriptions of a minimum of three such projects; and
- Annotation of the documents to describe the applicant's understanding of and ability to comply with typical U.S. building codes, regulations and laws including accessibility laws.

The dossier may contain documents in the other languages, however, all explanatory documents including the applicants resume must be in English. Translations must be provided for official documents such as transcripts and licenses.

4. BEFA COMMITTEE INTERVIEW

Once the applicant's dossier has been reviewed and the BEFA Committee has determined that it demonstrates the required level of competency, the applicant is invited for an interview. Interviews are conducted in English without a translator. The purpose of the interview is to verify that the applicant possesses:

- Responsibility for development, management, and implementation of projects submitted;
- An understanding of U.S. licensing and professional conduct requirements; and
- Knowledge of U.S. building codes and laws.

Successful interview applicants are recommended by the committee for NCARB certification. Many candidates seek NCARB certification in order to apply for reciprocal licensing in specific U.S. jurisdictions. Not all jurisdictions accept NCARB certification achieved through the BEFA process for reciprocal registration. It is important for applicants to directly confirm specific requirements for reciprocal licensing with the individual registration board.

To learn more about the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) program, please visit the NCARB web site (www.ncarb.org/certification/befacert.html) or contact Greg G. Hall, AIA, Ph.D.; Director, Education at 202/879-0535 or ghall@ncarb.org. DC