

Over the past decade, more than 300 architects have received their NCARB Certificate through the Broadly Experienced Architect (BEA) Program.

THE BEA PATH TO CERTIFICATION

Many architects seek NCARB certification in order to apply for reciprocal registration in U.S. jurisdictions. The Broadly Experienced Architect (BEA) Program provides a way for architects who do not have a professional architecture degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) to satisfy the education requirement for NCARB certification by demonstrating that they have achieved learning through experience as a registered architect.

To be eligible for the BEA Program, applicants must hold a current registration from a National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) Member Board, must have passed all divisions of the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®), and must have completed comprehensive architectural practice experience over a prescribed number of years. The extent of practice experience required to be eligible for the BEA program varies in relation to the level of post-secondary education:

- Architects who hold a pre-professional degree in architecture that is a component of a NAAB-accredited, CACB-accredited, or CACB-certified professional degree program must demonstrate **six years of practice as a registered architect.**
- Architects who hold any other baccalaureate or higher degree must demonstrate **eight years of practice as a registered architect.**
- Architects who do not hold a post-secondary degree must demonstrate **10 years of practice as a registered architect.**

The BEA program is a rigorous process that involves multiple steps:

1. NCARB RECORD

(Application fee: up to \$695)

Applicants are required to establish an active NCARB Record before beginning the BEA process.

2. EESA-NCARB EDUCATION EVALUATION

(EESA fee: \$1,500 paid to NAAB)

Applicants who have more than 64 semester credit hours of post-secondary education must obtain an evaluation of academic credit through the Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA). The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) administers the EESA program that compares your education with the *NCARB Education Standard*. The EESA-NCARB evaluation will indicate specific areas of educational deficiency. Applicants who have less than 64 semester credit hours of post-secondary education are not required to obtain an education evaluation through EESA.

3. EDUCATION DOSSIER

(Dossier review fee: \$1,500)

Following the completion of the education evaluation, NCARB will provide a detailed description of the required format and instructions for submission of the dossier. The education dossier is distinct from a professional portfolio of work. In the education dossier, applicants show how they have gained learning through experience in order to satisfy their education deficiencies and meet the *NCARB Education Standard*. Applicants who were required to obtain an education evaluation must prepare a dossier that demonstrates learning through experience in the specific subject areas of the *NCARB Education Standard* identified in their evaluation. Applicants who were not required to obtain an education evaluation

must prepare a dossier that demonstrates learning through experience in all subject areas.

4. BEA INTERVIEW *(Interview fee: \$1,000)*

Once the applicant's dossier has been reviewed and the BEA Committee has determined that it demonstrates the learning through experience to meet the *NCARB Education Standard*, the applicant is invited for an interview before the BEA Committee. The purpose of the interview is to verify the material presented in the dossier and the applicant's personal involvement.

Successful interview applicants are recommended by the committee for NCARB certification. Not all jurisdictions accept NCARB certification achieved through the BEA process for reciprocal registration. It is important for applicants to confirm specific requirements for reciprocal licensure directly with the individual registration board.

There are many factors that affect the length of time required to complete the BEA process. In addition to the time it takes to process and review records, evaluations, applications, and dossiers, applicants should factor in their own time requirements to prepare and submit the application and dossier. It takes approximately six months from the time an applicant submits a dossier to the committee's final recommendation.

*To learn more about the Broadly Experienced Architect (BEA) Program, please visit the NCARB web site (<http://www.ncarb.org/certification/beaR.html>) or contact Greg G. Hall, AIA, Ph.D., Director, Education at 202/879-0535 or ghall@ncarb.org. **DC***

A Dream Fulfilled

Trevor M. Harrison, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, grew up in Rochester, NY, dreaming of becoming an architect. When he took an internship with John Fayko, AIA, after receiving a Bachelor of Professional Studies from the University of Buffalo in 1990, he thought he was on his way to fulfilling his dream. Although Harrison did not have a professional degree, with his four-year pre-professional degree in architecture he was qualified to sit for the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) in New York after five years of experience. In June 1995, he completed the ARE and became licensed to practice architecture in New York.

In 2000, he and Jim Bridges, AIA, founded HBT Architects with the goal of providing a creative working environment for talented people. Today they have a staff of 14 with eight licensed architects. Their work includes hospitality and resort projects, as well as medical offices, hospitals, colleges, and universities. Since the firm was founded, HBT Architects has received seven AIA Rochester Design awards.

In order to meet the needs of his current clients and expand his business, Harrison decided to pursue an NCARB Certificate through the Broadly Experienced Architect (BEA) Program. With more than six years of practice as a registered architect and a pre-professional degree in architecture that was a component of a NAAB-accredited professional degree program, he met the BEA eligibility requirements. Harrison received his NCARB Certificate in March 2008. Today he is licensed in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and is pursuing reciprocal licensure in several other U.S. jurisdictions.

What made you seek an NCARB Certificate?

Originally I was contemplating moving to Seattle to take a position that I was offered. After looking into what I had to do to become licensed in Washington, it became apparent that I should seek NCARB certification. I ended up deciding not to move so I didn't pursue certification for a few years. When I started my own firm in 2000, I wanted my practice to be regional and knew that I would have to be NCARB-certified to make that happen.

Did you consider going back to school to get a professional degree from a NAAB-accredited program?

The degree I received from the University of Buffalo was part of the School for Architecture and Planning's 4 + 2 program. When I first graduated, I planned to work for one year to get



some experience and then return to school for my masters degree. I got a job working for John Fayko, AIA, in Rochester, NY, and he was a better teacher than I could find at any school. I decided to save my money and learn from John. By the time I realized that I could not meet my own career expectations with my undergraduate degree, I had a wife and two children—as well as strong roots in Rochester. Getting my masters degree was not practical because I had to consider both the expense of paying for additional education, as well as the loss of income I would incur by not working.

How would you describe the BEA process?

The process requires the applicant to review, document, and justify their education and professional experience. I will be honest; the BEA process is not for the fainthearted. It takes significant time, effort, and financial resources. With that said, I also found it rewarding. The process of organizing my architectural experience so that I was able to tell someone what I had done and learned was very satisfying.

How long did the entire BEA process take?

It took me a little less than two years from the time I decided to enter the process until the time I received the certification letter. This, of course, included a few months' worth of procrastination on my part. I also had to have the Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) compare my education to the NCARB Education Standard to determine my education deficiencies.

How did you select the projects to include in your dossier?

My EESA-NCARB Education Evaluation identified education deficiencies in five subject areas. My dossier had to show how my professional experiences equaled or improved upon what I would have learned in school. I decided to include projects that I had worked on that represented a turning point or challenge in my career. I felt that doing this would help me to be passionate about my written description as well my oral presentation of the information.

How long did it take to put your dossier together?

It took about two months to put the dossier together. In real hours, I think I spent less than 40 hours from start to finish. Most of that time was spent reviewing what projects to include

and formatting images of those projects. I had to prepare five subject areas and each one had four representative projects—so you can imagine that this was a lot of material. I used the template that NCARB provided, but modified it so that it was more reflective of my own experience.

Can you describe your interview with the BEA committee?

I LOVED the interview. It was held in Austin, TX. I had never been there, so that was fun. There were three people on the interview panel plus one observer. They were interesting and made me feel comfortable. I can honestly say that I was not nervous. After putting so much effort into my dossier, I was very prepared and I knew that I could explain my experience to anyone. Besides, let's be real, most people can talk about themselves if they need to and I am no exception. I think it took about 1.5 hours, but it was actually just a nice conversation with my peers that focused on my experiences in architecture.

How will your NCARB Certificate help your career?

As my firm continues to become more and more national, this certification will be of significant importance. Many of my clients build projects on tight time frames in various states. I have significant knowledge of their projects and how they work and my clients want me involved with them as they grow into other markets. I would not be able to meet my clients' time frames if I had to rely on getting approval for reciprocal licensure in each jurisdiction without certification. Plus, many states won't even allow reciprocal licensure without an NCARB Certificate. With my NCARB Certificate, I can be licensed in more jurisdictions so that I can serve my existing clients and develop new ones.

What recommendations do you have for someone beginning the BEA process?

Take it seriously, focus on it, and don't let things get in the way of completing it. Use the process as a chance to pause and look at the work you have done and the experiences you have had in architecture. By taking that approach, I found it to be fun. If you have questions about the process, the NCARB staff is a great help and resource.

The BEA process is not inexpensive, but it's a very worthwhile investment that allows greater mobility!