



ARCHITECTURAL ALPHABET SOUP

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Like many professions, architecture has a variety of organizations often referred to by their acronyms. The most familiar—NCARB, AIA, ACSA, NAAB, and AIAS—belong to the five collateral organizations that play important roles in the profession. Each organization represents different groups responsible for the education, training, registration, and practice of architects. While these organizations work together to advance the architectural profession, each has a different membership and mission.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURAL REGISTRATION BOARDS (NCARB)

NCARB is the national organization representing the state registration boards responsible for establishing, interpreting, and enforcing national standards for architectural licensure. These state boards comprise NCARB's membership. The Council's mission is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public through effective regulation and exemplary service.

NCARB relies on the work of hundreds of architect and Member Board Executive volunteers each year to guide our programs, services, and mission.

In the United States, the right to practice architecture and the right to use the title “architect” are granted by state registration boards. NCARB’s Member Boards work together to develop *Model Law* and *Model Regulations*, which serve as guides for the state boards when enacting legislation regarding the registration and practice of architects within their states.

NCARB also provides a variety of services to its Member Boards and to architects. The Council administers the Intern Development Program (IDP), a comprehensive training program created to ensure that interns in the architecture profession gain the knowledge and skills required for the independent practice of architecture. NCARB also develops and maintains the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®), a psychometrically justifiable and legally defensible examination that measures the level of competency necessary to practice architecture independently.

In addition, NCARB verifies and maintains a record of the education, experience, examinations, and registrations of Record holders—and certifies architects who have met the highest professional standards established by the Member Boards responsible for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. With an NCARB Certificate, architects are able to obtain reciprocal registrations in other U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions more easily.

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS (AIA)

The AIA is a professional organization for architects. Membership in the AIA is open to all registered architects and other interested citizens. The AIA’s mission is to serve as the voice of the architecture profession and as a resource for its members in service to society. These resources include continuing education programs and contract documents for use

in the design and construction industries. The AIA also encourages its members to nurture emerging professionals through their mentorship program. In addition, it conducts market research and provides analysis of the economic factors that affect the business of architecture.

THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE (ACSA)

ACSA represents architectural education programs worldwide. Its membership includes all of the accredited degree programs in the United States and Canada. The ACSA works to advance the quality of architectural education by encouraging dialogue among the diverse areas of discipline on issues that will affect the architectural profession in the future. It supports its member schools by facilitating teaching, research, scholarship, and creative works through intra/interdisciplinary activities, and by fostering public awareness of architectural education.

THE NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL ACCREDITING BOARD (NAAB)

NAAB’s mission is to provide leadership in the establishment of educational quality-assurance standards to enhance the value, relevance, and effectiveness of the architectural profession. The NAAB board is comprised of three members each from ACSA, AIA, and NCARB, as well as two members from AIAS and two public members. NAAB establishes the criteria by which professional degree programs in architecture in the United States are evaluated and accredits programs that meet those standards. Since most state registration boards in the United States require applicants for licensure to have graduated from a NAAB-accredited program, obtaining such a degree is an essential aspect of preparing for the professional practice of architecture. NAAB also administers the Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) program, which evaluates an applicant’s academic transcript in comparison

with the *NCARB Education Standard*. The EESA program was established to assist applicants who do not have a professional degree in architecture from a NAAB- or CACB/CCCA-accredited program who wish to apply for NCARB certification or for registration with an NCARB Member Board.

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS (AIAS)

AIAS is an independent, student-run organization whose mission is to promote excellence in architecture education, training, and practice. The AIAS serves as the voice of students to the educational system and the profession of architecture. AIAS representatives serve on NAAB accreditation teams and on the boards of directors of AIA and ACSA.

Although each of the collaterals has a different mission, the organizations work together in various ways to advance the profession. For example, last fall NAAB held the Accreditation Review Conference (ARC) so it could gather input from all the collaterals before updating the conditions and procedures for accreditation. Another way they work together is by having observers from one organization sit on some of the other organizations’ committees. They also have joint committees, such as the Intern Development Program Advisory Committee (IDPAC), that bring representatives from the different collaterals together to discuss issues of mutual interest.

One thing that all of the collaterals have in common is that they rely on the work of volunteers to advance their missions. NCARB relies on the work of hundreds of architect and Member Board Executive volunteers each year to guide its programs, services, and mission. **DC**