

There are four primary players in your path to licensure: NCARB, Prometric, your individual licensing board, and you. Understanding the roles of each participant will make your journey to licensure easier. It is also important to remember that your relationship with NCARB and your licensing board will last you a lifetime.

THE BASICS

- You can't call yourself an architect until you obtain a license.
- Being licensed in one jurisdiction does not make you registered in all jurisdictions.
- Requirements for becoming licensed can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.
- Prometric scores the ARE based on NCARB's scoring criteria.
- NCARB provides study resources for free.
- Individual licensing boards release ARE scores to candidates, not NCARB or Prometric (unless the board participates in NCARB's Direct Registration Program).
- Your individual licensing board grants your license to practice.
- It is up to you to manage your career and your path to licensure.

"There are four primary players in your path to licensure: NCARB, Prometric, your individual licensing board, and you. Understanding the roles of each player will make your journey to licensure easier," says Erica J. Brown, AIA, NCARB, Director, Architect Registration Examination. "It is also important to remember that your relationship with NCARB and your licensing board will last you a lifetime."

START YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NCARB

Prior to being made eligible to sit for the ARE, all candidates are required to start an NCARB Record. An NCARB Record is a detailed, verified record of education and experience used to establish qualifications for examination, registration, and certification. All 54 architectural licensing boards accept the ARE and the Intern Development Program (IDP) as a national standard for testing and training for the profession and it is necessary to start an NCARB Record to gain access to these tools. Many future architects choose to start their NCARB Record while they are enrolled in architecture school. Depending on the specific program, many students are able to start earning IDP training hours before graduation. However, all candidates are required to complete their jurisdiction's education requirements before they can take the ARE.

START YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR INDIVIDUAL LICENSING BOARD

Once you have decided on the jurisdiction where you want to receive your initial license, you will need to contact that board to ensure that you meet its eligibility requirements. Each licensing board has different education and training requirements and additional

information such as how long before you will be made eligible to take the exam, exam application fees, and its practices for exam score delivery. Please refer to NCARB's web site to see an overview of each individual licensing board's requirements. Candidates are responsible for contacting their board to find out its specific jurisdictional requirements.

To start the examination process most jurisdictions will have an application for you to complete. Some jurisdictions may require copies of educational transcripts and some may want you to submit your NCARB Record. You cannot schedule any division of the ARE until this process is complete and the board approves your eligibility.

For more information on individual licensing board requirements please refer to NCARB's web site at <http://www.ncarb.org/Getting-an-Initial-License/Registration-Board-Requirements.aspx>.

SCHEDULE YOUR DIVISIONS

After your jurisdiction approves your eligibility to test, Prometric will send you an Authorization to Test (ATT), a letter that outlines the divisions you are eligible to sit for and the duration of time that your authorization is valid.

After you receive your ATT, you are able to start scheduling your exam appointments. To do this, contact NCARB's testing consultant, Prometric. In addition to the ARE, Prometric test centers administer a wide variety of computer-based exams across the United States and Canada. You can use their web site or toll-free number to schedule your exams. Prometric will manage the scheduling of your divisions, as well as the rescheduling of your appointment, if needed. Prometric also manages the scheduling of exams for candidates that have been previously approved by their board and NCARB for special testing accommodations. For more information on test center policies and scheduling your ARE examinations, please go to Prometric's web site at <http://www.prometric.com/NCARB/default.htm>.

There are also a few tips to remember when you are preparing to schedule divisions of the ARE.

- Know where you want to test before scheduling an appointment and have several dates and times in mind as options.
- Prometric cannot guarantee that you will be able to schedule an exam at a particular test center on a specific date and time, so plan ahead and schedule your divisions a few months ahead of the date you'd like to take it.
- If you need to reschedule a division, you must do so a minimum of three business days prior to your originally scheduled appointment. **If you do not do so, you will forfeit your entire examination fee.** The fee to reschedule an appointment is \$35.

- Candidates must agree to a confidentiality agreement before beginning any ARE division.
- If you experience technical problems during your examination, you must be report it directly to the ARE Helpdesk within 10 days of your exam, as stipulated in the *ARE Guidelines*, available at <http://www.ncarb.org/ARE/ARE-Overview.aspx>.

NCARB EXAM RESOURCES

NCARB provides candidates with practice vignette software, exam guides, and the *ARE Guidelines* to help them prepare for the examination free of charge. These materials are intended to familiarize candidates with exam policies, the structure of test questions, and how to use the examination software during an actual exam. However, it is ultimately the candidate's responsibility to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate competency. For more information, you can download the *ARE Guidelines* at <http://www.ncarb.org/ARE/ARE-Overview.aspx>.

ARE SCORE REPORTING

Within four to six weeks after taking a division, Prometric will score your examination. Then your score report will be generated and transmitted to your licensing board. After your licensing board receives your score report and completes any additional processing, they will mail you a copy for your records. However, if your jurisdiction participates in NCARB's Direct Registration program, and you were made eligible through this program, NCARB will manage the processing of your score report.

All scores are reported as pass or fail. Candidates who fail a division will receive limited diagnostic information. The diagnostics reported are limited since the ARE is a licensing examination developed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public—as such, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The ARE is not intended to be a teaching tool nor is it designed as a placement or certification examination.

If you fail a division, you are not allowed to retake it for a six-month period after the original exam date. This rule was established for two reasons. First, NCARB has a library of test questions and vignettes, but the library is not of sufficient size to offer each division of the exam more than once every six months to any given candidate. Second, it is important to spend the time between test administrations gaining additional knowledge and experience in the particular areas being tested.

Remember, your jurisdiction will grant you a license to practice architecture, not NCARB or Prometric. Therefore, your individual licensing board is responsible for the release of score reports to its candidates according to its individual laws and regulations. Since each jurisdiction has different policies and procedures, final processing time can vary from board to board. For example, some jurisdictions require scores to be reviewed at a board meeting before they can be released. Other jurisdictions may enter all of your scores into their own database before mailing you a copy.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE COMPLETED THE ARE!

Once you have successfully completed all divisions of the ARE, your jurisdiction will likely require you to submit an application for licensure. Contact your local jurisdiction to verify its specific requirements. After completion of your licensing board's requirements, you will be issued a license to practice architecture in that jurisdiction.

YOU ARE OFFICIALLY AN ARCHITECT. WHAT'S NEXT?

After you become an architect, you may be eligible to obtain your NCARB Certificate. NCARB certification gives an architect the mobility needed in today's economy, a competitive edge in the workplace, and the ability to quickly and easily obtain reciprocal registration in other jurisdictions. For more information on the benefits of NCARB certification go to: <http://www.ncarb.org/Certification-and-Reciprocity/Value-of-an-NCARB-Certificate.aspx>.

Once you have received your initial license (and any future reciprocal licenses), be sure to find out if you are required to meet any continuing education (CE) requirements for renewal of your license. Many states now require continuing education, but the requirements vary between jurisdictions. NCARB offers an extensive monograph collection for all architects to use to meet these requirements. For more information on the NCARB monograph program, go to: <http://www.ncarb.org/Continuing-Education/Value-of-NCARB-Monographs.aspx>.

"From the time you start your NCARB Record to when you sit for the ARE and then become NCARB certified, you will find many opportunities to use and enhance your relationship with NCARB throughout your career," Brown says. "You never know, some day you may even have an opportunity to volunteer for an NCARB committee or your licensing board!" **DC**