

# Architectural Experience Program®

## GUIDELINES

*This version of the AXP  
Guidelines will go into effect  
on November 18, 2025.*



NCARB

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Registration Boards (NCARB)

This document, effective November 18, 2025, defines  
the requirements for the NCARB Architectural  
Experience Program.

This document supersedes all previous editions of  
the *AXP Guidelines*

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# INTRODUCTION

## About NCARB

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards' (NCARB) membership is made up of the architectural licensing boards of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. NCARB, in collaboration with these boards, facilitates the licensure and credentialing of architects to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

While each jurisdiction is responsible for regulating the practice of architecture within its borders, NCARB works with its Member Boards and volunteers to develop and facilitate national standards for licensure, including the national examination and experience program. NCARB also recommends regulatory guidelines for licensing boards and helps architects expand their professional reach through the NCARB Certificate.

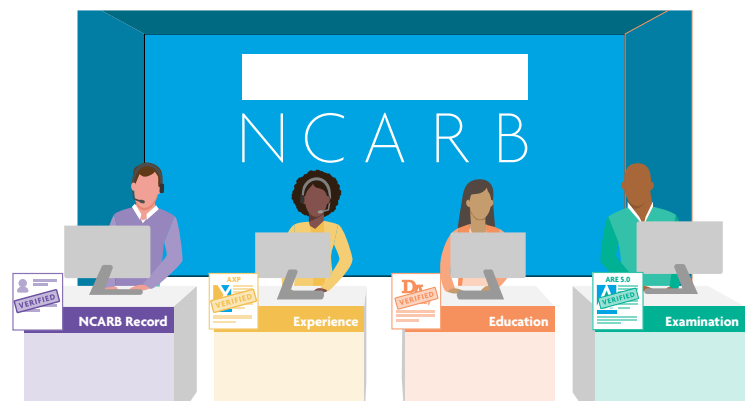
### NCARB MISSION

*NCARB, in collaboration with licensing boards, facilitates the licensure and credentialing of architects to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.*

## NCARB Services

NCARB exists to help you advance from student to practicing architect, so our services span the many phases of your career—think of us as your professional guide. Whether you're navigating the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), completing the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®), or earning your NCARB Certificate, NCARB is here to help.

And with our secure digital filing system, we can store all your major milestones, including official transcripts, employment history, examination successes, and more—a safe record of all of your achievements and accomplishments, ready to be transmitted to the jurisdiction of your choice.



## Licensure

Before you can officially call yourself an architect, you have to earn your license. Once you do, you'll prove to your firm and your community that you're able to protect the health, safety, and welfare of those who live and work in the built environment. Each licensing board has its own set of requirements, but navigating them doesn't have to be complicated. NCARB has developed a number of tools and resources to help you succeed in meeting your jurisdiction's specific standards in the following three areas:

### LICENSURE/REGISTRATION

*NCARB uses the words "licensure" and "registration" interchangeably when talking about the process of becoming an architect.*

## NAAB

### EDUCATION

There is no single degree required to become an architect, but the degree you pursue can affect your future licensure options. Many jurisdictions require that applicants for initial licensure earn a professional degree in architecture from a program accredited by the [National Architectural Accrediting Board \(NAAB\)](#) or the [Canadian Architectural Certification Board \(CACB\)](#).

Some jurisdictions offer additional licensure pathways for individuals with some other college degree or no degree. Through these pathways, you'll typically earn additional professional experience to supplement your education. More information about starting your education in architecture can be found in the [Education Guidelines](#).



### EXPERIENCE

Licensure candidates also have to gain experience under the supervision of a practicing architect. The AXP provides the framework to guide you through earning and recording your professional experience—covering everything from site design to project management. And you can start reporting experience after graduating high school or an equivalent.

We know you'll be busy learning the ins and outs of architecture. That's why we offer a number of tools that can help you log experience hours and understand the program requirements. And since completing the AXP is a core component for certification, you'll be on your way to earning your NCARB Certificate, too.

Ready to start earning experience? All the information you need can be found in this document.



### EXAMINATION

Another key part of becoming an architect is demonstrating your knowledge and skills through the ARE. With exam divisions that are designed to reflect the current profession, the ARE assesses your competency to practice architecture independently. Passing the exam is another big step toward finally getting that license.

Whenever you need a helping hand, our tips, guides, and inspiring success stories are there to make sure you have what you need to get it done. To learn more about the exam and start planning, read the [ARE Guidelines](#).

## NCARB Certification

Following initial licensure, obtaining an NCARB Certificate ensures you can get the most out of your career in architecture. It provides mobility and signifies that you have met the national standards that guide the 55 licensing boards. With an NCARB Certificate in hand, it's simpler to get licensed across jurisdictions—allowing you the freedom and flexibility to pursue your career and connect with clients regardless of location.



### BENEFITS OF THE CERTIFICATE

Once you've earned your NCARB Certificate, you can take advantage of all the following benefits:

#### NCARB CREDENTIAL

Obtaining and maintaining an NCARB Certificate demonstrates that you've met national standards. You can now use the letters "NCARB" after your name.

#### RECIPROCITY

The Certificate streamlines the process for obtaining a license in a new jurisdiction.

#### MOBILITY

Gaining reciprocity in multiple jurisdictions allows you the freedom to go wherever the work takes you.

#### COMPETITIVE EDGE

Setting yourself apart from other architects can be key for your career; the greater flexibility you'll enjoy as a Certificate holder is often an important factor for firms when hiring and promoting.

#### SECURITY

As an NCARB Certificate holder, you don't have to worry about record keeping—all your information is stored on our secure server, ready whenever you need it.

#### FREE CONTINUING EDUCATION

Earning continuing education hours in Health, Safety, and Welfare (HSW) has never been easier, thanks to our [Continuum Education courses](#)—free for Certificate holders!

### CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

*For more information about how to access all the opportunities the NCARB Certificate has to offer, read the [Certification Guidelines](#).*

## What is the Architectural Experience Program?

The Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) is an essential step in the path to becoming an architect. Through the AXP, you will learn about the daily realities of architectural practice, acquire comprehensive experience in basic practice areas, explore specialized areas of practice, develop professional judgment, and refine your career goals. The AXP is developed and administered by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). In most jurisdictions, completion of the AXP is a requirement for initial licensure (registration). The program is structured to help prepare you to practice architecture independently upon initial licensure.

### DEMONSTRATING COMPETENT PERFORMANCE

The AXP features 16 competencies spread across six experience areas. These competencies are critical areas of practice related to ensuring that independently practicing architects are able to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public as they engage the built environment. To complete the AXP, you must gain experience in each of the competencies. There are two methods of reporting AXP experience:

#### 1. REPORTING HOURS

Most licensure candidates will complete the AXP by reporting hours. Under this method, you will need to document a minimum of **3,740 required hours under the six experience areas** to complete the program. The hours you report must have been spent earning experience relevant to the AXP's experience areas and competencies. Some competencies may be easier to develop earlier in your career, while others may take more time and experience to complete. You and your supervisor should work together to create a plan that best fits your goals and abilities.

At least half of your experience must be completed under the supervision of a qualified U.S. or Canadian architect; however, there are many ways to complete the remainder of your AXP hours outside the employment of a qualified U.S. or Canadian architect. These opportunities will be covered in the experience settings section.

#### 2. SUBMITTING AN AXP PORTFOLIO

The second method of reporting experience is through an AXP Portfolio.

This method is intended for experienced design professionals who put getting licensed on hold. It allows you to demonstrate your experience through the preparation of an online portfolio. Through the portfolio method, you must submit examples of your work demonstrating competency in each of the AXP Portfolio's 96 tasks.



SIX EXPERIENCE AREAS
Practice Management
Project Management
Programming & Analysis
Project Planning & Design
Project Development & Documentation
Construction & Evaluation

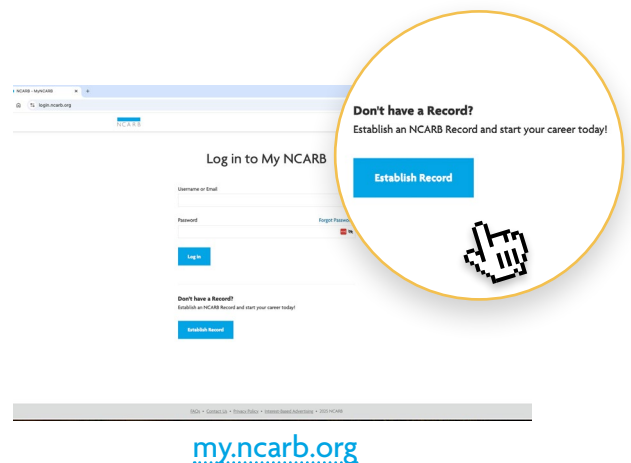
# STARTING THE AXP

In order to report experience for the AXP, you'll need an NCARB Record—a detailed, verified record of your education and experience, used to establish your qualifications for examination, registration, and certification. You'll also need an NCARB Record to start and complete the ARE or apply for the NCARB Certificate.

## Establishing Your NCARB Record

To create your NCARB Record, follow these steps:

1. Navigate to [my.ncarb.org](https://my.ncarb.org).
2. Click **Establish Record** or log in to your existing My NCARB account.
3. Once you have established your account, add the NCARB Record service. If you need additional time or information to complete the application, you can save it and return later.
4. In order to establish an NCARB Record and receive your NCARB Record number, you must complete the application and submit payment. Once you click Submit, you will receive two emails. The first will confirm receipt of your payment. The second will assign your NCARB Record number and provide further instructions.



More information on the cost of establishing and maintaining your NCARB Record can be found on our [fees page](#). All fees are subject to change and are non-refundable unless otherwise noted. If you have applied for an NCARB Record in the past, please do not reapply. Instead, reactivate your existing Record by logging in to your NCARB Record online and selecting the Annual Renewal option. All renewals and reactivations are submitted online.

# EXPERIENCE AREAS

The AXP is designed to help you gain the necessary experience to prepare you for the profession. It includes **16 competencies** across the **six experience areas**. These competencies were informed by the *2022 Analysis of Practice* and are defined in the [NCARB Competency Standard for Architects](#), which establishes the foundation of initial licensure requirements for architects.

On the following pages, you can find more detailed descriptions of the experience areas and competencies. The descriptions under each competency serve to illustrate some of the core knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that an individual must be able to demonstrate to prove their qualification to practice as an architect. These descriptions are not exhaustive in their establishing of the criteria necessary to obtain a license to practice architecture in an NCARB member jurisdiction.

## SIX EXPERIENCE AREAS

Practice Management .....	9
Project Management .....	11
Programming & Analysis .....	12
Project Planning & Design .....	14
Project Development & Documentation.....	15
Construction & Evaluation.....	16



## Practice Management

Practice Management is where you'll gain experience running an architecture firm—including the ins and outs of managing a business, marketing your firm, securing projects, working with clients, and sustaining a positive and professional work environment.

### PRACTICE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

Upon completing the AXP, you should be able to demonstrate your capability to independently perform the following competencies:

- **Competency 5\*: Integrate socio-demographic considerations and universal design principles.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Understand how diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice principles impact architectural projects and practice.

- **Competency 11: Execute contracts for professional services.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Explain basic types of contracts between various project parties (e.g., Owner-Architect, Architect-Consultant, Owner-Contractor, etc.) and how to establish scope, schedule, and fees for services.
- ☐ Understand the appropriateness of different agreements in relation to scale and type of project, including alternatives for partial services.
- ☐ Understand basic risk implications of common contract terms and conditions for the various contract parties.

- **Competency 14: Understand statutes and regulations that govern architectural practice within U.S. jurisdictions to provide services legally.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Comply with the laws and rules of architectural practice in the jurisdiction(s) in which they practice.
- ☐ Solicit services in compliance with professional and legal practice requirements.
- ☐ Understand the regulatory requirements for continuing professional development.

- **Competency 15: Understand ethical and professional standards that govern architectural practice.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Understand the role of the architect in society and the duties and responsibilities to clients, building occupants, co-professionals, and the public.
- ☐ Understand regulatory and professional ethical standards and how to adhere to applicable ethical standards.
- ☐ Provide services that they, in collaboration with consultants, can effectively deliver.
- ☐ Identify and manage risks arising from conflicts of interest.

- **Competency 16: Understand foundational business principles to operate a practice.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Monitor the financial health of the business to ensure a proper level of service can be provided throughout a project.
- ☐ Assess and mitigate business risks (e.g., professional liability insurance).
- ☐ Allocate firm resources and staff to ensure adequate delivery of services to clients.

**\*Note:** Other aspects of Competency 5 appear under the Programming & Analysis and Project Planning & Design experience areas.

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## Project Management

In Project Management, you'll learn how to deliver projects that meet your contractual requirements, so you'll be prepared to budget, coordinate, oversee, and execute a project.

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

Upon completing the AXP, you should be able to demonstrate your capability to independently perform the following competencies:

- **Competency 12: Implement a work plan according to a project's scope, schedule, and budget.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Collaborate with the client and consultants to align expectations for design scope, schedule, and budget.
- ☐ Monitor work plan throughout a project and report on progress.
- ☐ Organize tasks and resources to deliver a project according to contractual requirements.
- ☐ Facilitate the appropriate approval processes throughout design and documentation efforts.

- **Competency 13: Organize and coordinate an interdisciplinary project team.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Identify qualified consultants and team members for a project based on project requirements.
- ☐ Facilitate communication and collaboration of consultants, clients, and relevant stakeholders throughout a project.
- ☐ Implement processes to assess the quality of work throughout a project.

## Programming & Analysis

Programming & Analysis is the first phase of a project, often referred to as pre-design. You'll gain experience related to researching and evaluating client requirements, building code and zoning regulations, and site data to develop recommendations on the feasibility of a project.

### PROGRAMMING & ANALYSIS COMPETENCIES

Upon completing the AXP, you should be able to demonstrate your capability to independently perform the following competencies:

- **Competency 1: Assess regulatory design requirements.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Identify local, state, and federal authorities having jurisdiction over a project.
- ☐ Understand the regulatory and jurisdictional approval process applicable to a project in order to obtain the necessary approvals.
- ☐ Determine the specific regulations, codes, and rules (e.g., zoning rules, building and environmental codes, historic preservation requirements, design covenants, etc.) that apply to a project.

- **Competency 2: Evaluate existing project conditions.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Assess existing site and building conditions.
- ☐ Evaluate project feasibility based on budget, schedule, constraints, and risks.
- ☐ Assess how a proposed project aligns with planning and zoning policies in place and impacts the broader context (e.g., neighborhood, community, environmental, etc.).

- **Competency 3: Develop a program that establishes project criteria.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Translate client vision and goals into requirements (e.g., spatial, planning, material, technical, etc.) that outline the specific objectives and design criteria for a project, and that meet the project feasibility requirements.
- ☐ Review precedents relevant to the history, function, organization, and technical requirements of related projects and integrate findings into a building program.
- ☐ Evaluate and integrate collected feedback and input from users, the community, and any other stakeholders.

- **Competency 4\*: Create design solutions that support public and environmental well-being.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Implement design strategies that support the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants and the neighboring community.
- ☐ Advise clients and consultants regarding the sustainability and resiliency of design options in accordance with relevant codes, regulations, ratings, industry standards, and technical information.

- **Competency 5\*: Integrate socio-demographic considerations and universal design principles.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Utilize meaningful engagement processes that incorporate diverse perspectives into design solutions.

**\*Note:** Other aspects of Competency 4 appear under the Project Planning & Design experience area. Other aspects of Competency 5 appear under the Practice Management and Project Planning & Design experience areas.

## Project Planning & Design

Project Planning & Design covers the schematic design phase of a project. You'll learn to lay out the building design, review building codes and regulations, coordinate schematics with consultants, and communicate design concepts with your client.

### PROJECT PLANNING & DESIGN COMPETENCIES

Upon completing the AXP, you should be able to demonstrate your capability to independently perform the following competencies:

- **Competency 4\*: Create design solutions that support public and environmental well-being.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Implement design strategies that minimize environmental impact, safeguard environmental sustainability, ensure longevity and durability of projects, and adapt to evolving environmental and societal conditions.

- **Competency 5\*: Integrate socio-demographic considerations and universal design principles.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Implement design strategies that address diverse cultural, social, and functional considerations, ensuring built environments are inclusive, accessible, and adaptive.
- ☐ Utilize meaningful engagement processes that incorporate diverse perspectives into design solutions.

- **Competency 6: Create design solutions that address project requirements.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Apply design principles, applicable codes and regulations, and knowledge of materials, systems, and constructability to achieve programmatic requirements and goals for the site and building.
- ☐ Evaluate design for conformance with a project's program, including the client's objectives and regulatory requirements.
- ☐ Analyze cost estimates for conformance with proposed design solution and project budget in order to advise clients about alternatives for managing initial and long-term project costs.

**\*Note:** Other aspects of Competency 4 appear under the Programming & Analysis experience area. Other aspects of Competency 5 appear under the Practice Management and Programming & Analysis experience areas.

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## Project Development & Documentation

In Project Development & Documentation, you'll gain experience with projects after the schematic design has been approved—focusing on construction documents and coordinating with regulatory authorities to gain the necessary approvals for construction.

### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & DOCUMENTATION COMPETENCIES

Upon completing the AXP, you should be able to demonstrate your capability to independently perform the following competencies:

- **Competency 7: Create deliverables that convey a design solution.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Communicate the proposed design to clients and other stakeholders using appropriate and responsive methods (e.g., written, verbal, graphic, modeling techniques, etc.).
- ☐ Develop comprehensive and coordinated Instruments of Service (e.g., plans, sections, elevations and/or details, models, etc.) that convey design intent and project requirements, can be used to obtain approvals and permits, and guide the construction of a project.
- ☐ Develop specifications that describe the materials, qualitative requirements, and execution.

- **Competency 8: Coordinate the integration of building systems into a project design.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Understand and integrate appropriate building and engineering systems utilizing project consultants and specialists (e.g., acoustic, structural, civil, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, etc.).
- ☐ Coordinate selected systems into the building design and identify and resolve conflicts.

## Construction & Evaluation

In Construction & Evaluation, you'll get involved with the construction administration and post-construction phases of a project—this includes being out on the job site; meeting with contractors, clients, and building officials; and punch lists, leading to the completion of your project.

### CONSTRUCTION & EVALUATION COMPETENCIES

Upon completing the AXP, you should be able to demonstrate your capability to independently perform the following competencies:

- **Competency 9: Prepare and administer documentation of the construction phase.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Advise clients on the impact (e.g., process, cost, time, quality control, etc.) of a selected procurement method on the delivery of the project.
- ☐ Assist in bidding and negotiation for selected procurement method.
- ☐ Apply appropriate systems for record-keeping, document control, and revision status.
- ☐ Provide appropriate responses for questions from the client, authority-having jurisdiction, contractors, and suppliers (e.g., requests for information, substitution requests, change order requests, etc.).
- ☐ Review and act on a contractor's application for payment.
- ☐ Perform closeout activities and deliver final documents to client and other parties as required.

- **Competency 10: Evaluate the progress of construction for conformance with contract documents and design intent.**

*At the point of initial licensure, architects with this competency can ...*

- ☐ Complete site visits and participate in meetings at appropriate intervals to observe construction progress and assist in interpreting the construction documents.
- ☐ Evaluate the work performed in relation to the construction schedule; if they are not in alignment, coordinate with the client and contractor in the development of a solution.
- ☐ Review, evaluate, and take appropriate action on shop drawings, submittals, testing and inspection reports, and samples.
- ☐ Advise and assist the client with project closeout procedures (e.g., substantial and final completion, review and preparation of closeout materials, etc.).
- ☐ Evaluate the performance of a project after completion compared to the design intent.



# DOCUMENTING YOUR EXPERIENCE THROUGH HOURS

In order to document your experience through the hourly method, you'll need to submit reports of your hours under each experience area. These reports must be submitted within one year of earning the experience in order to gain full credit—learn more about reporting time frames in the [Reporting Policy](#) section.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

In order to be eligible to participate in the AXP, you must have successfully earned a high school diploma or an established equivalent.

## Required Hours

To complete the AXP, you must meet the required number of hours for each of the six experience areas. For each experience report, your experience must be related to the competencies identified in the specific experience area.

Experience Area	Required Hours
Practice Management	160
Project Management	360
Programming & Analysis	260
Project Planning & Design	1,080
Project Development & Documentation	1,520
Construction & Evaluation	360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,740</b>

**Note:** Some jurisdictions may require additional experience and/or have a minimum employment duration requirement, so NCARB recommends that you continue to report all of your hours even after completing the AXP. Doing so will help facilitate licensure and reciprocity in jurisdictions that have additional experience requirements.

## Experience Settings

Your experience reports will fall under one of two experience settings: setting A or setting O. These settings separate your experience into two categories:

- **A:** Work performed for an architecture firm under the supervision of an architect licensed in a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction.
- **O:** Experiences that can be performed outside an architecture firm.

They serve to define the type of organization, the work performed, and who verifies the experience.

## EXPERIENCE SETTING A: PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE

**You must earn a minimum of 1,860 hours in experience setting A.** There is no maximum number of hours you may earn in this experience setting—you may complete the entire AXP under experience setting A.

In order to qualify for the AXP, these hours require direct supervision by an AXP supervisor licensed as an architect in a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction, while employed by an organization engaged in the **lawful practice** of architecture.

You may be employed as a W-2 employee or as an independent contractor, as long as your work is paid (see Employment Requirements) and you meet the definition of direct supervision.

Experience earned under this setting may be earned via in-person or remote work.

### LAWFUL PRACTICE

*The definition of the “lawful practice” of architecture is determined by individual jurisdictions. For more information, contact your registration board.*

**Note:** For experience setting A, the organization can be located in any country as long as it is engaged in the lawful practice of architecture and your work is supervised by an architect licensed in a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction.

## EXPERIENCE SETTING O: OTHER EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

If you are not currently working for an architecture firm under the supervision of a U.S. or Canadian architect, there are many other opportunities for earning the required hours to complete the AXP. Some of these experiences require employment, but others do not. There is no minimum number of hours required for this experience setting, although many of the opportunities have a maximum limit. You can earn a maximum of 1,860 hours total under experience setting O.

Opportunity	Type	Who Approves	Where the Hours Go	Hours
<a href="#">Other Work Experience Under Licensed Professionals</a>	<a href="#">Employment</a>	AXP Supervisor	Any AXP experience area	<b>Up to 1,860 hours</b>
<a href="#">Design or Construction Related Employment</a>	<a href="#">Employment</a>	AXP Supervisor	Any AXP experience area	<b>Up to 320 hours</b>
<a href="#">Community-Based Design Center/Collaborative</a>	<a href="#">Volunteer</a>	“Designated” AXP Supervisor	Any AXP experience area	<b>Up to 320 hours</b>
<a href="#">Site Visit With Mentor</a>	<a href="#">See Opportunity Details</a>	Mentor	Construction & Evaluation	<b>Up to 40 hours</b>
<a href="#">Construction Work</a>	<a href="#">Employment/Volunteer</a>	AXP Supervisor	Construction & Evaluation	<b>Up to 320 hours</b>
<a href="#">Design Competitions</a>	<a href="#">See Opportunity Details</a>	Mentor	Any AXP experience area	<b>Up to 320 hours</b>
<a href="#">CSI Certification: CCCA</a>	Certification	NCARB	Construction & Evaluation	<b>40 hours</b>
<a href="#">CSI Certification: CCS</a>	Certification	NCARB	Project Planning & Design	<b>40 hours</b>
<a href="#">NCARB's Professional Conduct CE Series</a>	Continuing Education	NCARB	Practice Management	<b>Up to 10 hours</b>
<a href="#">Continuing Education for HSW</a>	Continuing Education	NCARB	Any AXP experience area	<b>Up to 20 hours per area</b>

## Employment Requirements

To earn experience in setting A or work-related setting O opportunities including: “Other Work Experience Under Licensed Professionals,” “Design or Construction Related Employment,” and some scenarios in “Construction Work,” you must be employed.

- **Unpaid Internships:** Unpaid internships are not eligible to earn experience hours in experience setting A and employment opportunities in experience setting O.
- **International Experience:** Experience earned outside of the U.S. or Canada only qualifies for AXP experience when gained at an organization engaged in the practice of architecture (candidate must meet employment requirements) or at an approved Community-Based Design Center/Collaborative.
- **Academic Experience:** Experience may qualify for both academic requirements and AXP credit only if it is completed in one of the AXP experience opportunities listed above where employment is required.

## AXP Supervisor

Your AXP supervisor is the individual who supervises you on a daily basis and has professional knowledge of and responsibility for your work. Your AXP supervisor is required to certify that the information you submit on your experience report is true, correct, and related to developing competency in one of the AXP’s six experience areas.

AXP supervisors are usually registered architects; however, in certain experience opportunities in setting O, your AXP supervisor may be a professional from another discipline.

In experience setting A and the opportunities within setting O that require your AXP supervisor to be licensed, your AXP supervisor must have an active license at the time the experience occurred. However, your supervisor does not have to be registered in the jurisdiction where they or you are located. You may have multiple supervisors over the course of your experience.

**Note:** There are no experience opportunities under which you may serve as your own AXP supervisor, even if you are self-employed.

### EARNING EXPERIENCE IN NY

*If you are earning experience in New York, you must contact the New York State Board for Architecture to verify its supervisor requirements.*

### AXP SUPERVISORS

*If you are an AXP supervisor, we have resources on our [website](#) that can help you understand your role and expectations. You only need a free My NCARB account to be a supervisor; you do not need an NCARB Record. Learn more about [reviewing and approving](#) AXP experience reports.*

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## Direct Supervision

To earn experience hours in workplace settings described in this document, you must work under the direct supervision of an AXP supervisor. Your supervisor must verify your experience and foster a professional relationship that is grounded in a direct professional association.

“Direct supervision” of an AXP participant must occur either through personal contact and/or remote communication (e.g. email, online markups, webinars, internet), provided that your supervisor maintains control over your work and has sufficient professional knowledge to determine the competency of your performance.

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## Mentor

You may have many mentors throughout your career—these can be loyal advisors, teachers, or coaches. In the AXP, there are opportunities for your mentor to certify certain experience opportunities and provide guidance in your professional development.

In order to qualify for these opportunities, your mentor must hold a current license to practice architecture in a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction. Your mentor does not have to be registered in the jurisdiction where they or you are located.

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## Reporting Policy

All AXP experience must be reported within the required amount of time. Experience must be submitted through NCARB’s systems. To earn full credit for experience, you must submit all experience within one year of gaining it.

Experience reported beyond this one-year period will be accepted at a reduced value of 75% toward the AXP requirements.

Provisions have been made for reasonable extensions to the one-year filing period. For more information on the reporting policy and extensions, please refer to the [NCARB website](#).

**Note:** Architects licensed in the U.S. and Canada documenting experience for NCARB certification, along with international architects completing the International Architect Path to Certification, **are not subject** to this reporting policy. All experience reports must be submitted electronically through NCARB systems. For more details on NCARB certification requirements and options, refer to the [Certification Guidelines](#).

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## Experience Setting O Opportunities

### OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE UNDER LICENSED PROFESSIONALS

You may earn up to **1,860 hours for working in any combination of the following employment settings:**

For experience gained in the United States or Canada:

- Direct supervision by an individual licensed as an architect in a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction in an organization not engaged in the practice of architecture.
- Direct supervision by an individual licensed in a U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction as a landscape architect or engineer (practicing as a structural, civil, mechanical, fire protection, or electrical engineer in the field of building construction).

For experience gained outside of the United States or Canada:

- Direct supervision by an architect not registered in the United States or Canada engaged in the practice of architecture.

### DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION RELATED EMPLOYMENT

You may earn up to **320 hours for working in design or construction related employment.** Only experience that aligns with the competencies as described in the experience areas can qualify for AXP hours.

Design or construction related activities qualify under the direct supervision of a person experienced in the activity of:

- Analysis of existing buildings
- Planning
- Programming
- Design of interior space
- Review of technical submissions
- Management of building construction activities

No license is required for the AXP supervisor for experience gained in this opportunity.

### COMMUNITY-BASED DESIGN CENTER/COLLABORATIVE

You may earn up to **320 hours for volunteer service** in support of a pre-approved charitable organization outside of a recognized employment setting or academic requirement.

Community-Based Design Center/Collaborative organizations must apply to NCARB and be pre-approved by NCARB before the experience occurs.

**To be considered as a recognized organization, the Community-Based Design Center/Collaborative must meet the following criteria:**

- The organization must have 501(c)(3) status as a charitable organization or equivalent nonprofit for public benefit status.
- The work must be in support of “building design” or “planning” projects.
- The organization must have an established ongoing relationship with an architect who can be responsible for your direct supervision. This architect will be considered the “designated AXP supervisor” for the organization.
- The work performed by the organization must be documented as related to the competencies as described in the experience areas and certified by the “designated AXP supervisor” as directly related to the practice of architecture.

#### QUALIFYING ORGANIZATIONS

*For the list of qualifying Community-Based Design Center/Collaborative organizations currently recognized by NCARB, please check [our website](#).*

### SITE VISIT WITH MENTOR

You may earn up to **40 hours in Construction & Evaluation for visiting construction sites** with your AXP mentor. The site visit must be outside of a recognized employment setting.

#### EXPECTATIONS OF MENTOR

- Opportunities to see the progress of a job over time are ideal; however, single visits to a site are acceptable
- The experience should be interactive with opportunities to discuss how issues related to the specific project were resolved
- The discussion should include why particular design decisions were made

#### EXPECTATIONS OF THE AXP PARTICIPANT

- You should be able to review and discuss the project relative to the drawings
- You should interact with members of the design and construction industry involved in the project

### CONSTRUCTION WORK

You may earn up to **320 hours in Construction & Evaluation for construction work** performed in either of two scenarios:

- Paid position meeting the AXP employment requirement
- Volunteer service at a nonprofit organization

#### GENERAL EMPLOYMENT SCENARIOS

Qualifying construction activities include “hands-on” experience working for a variety of organizations including, but not limited to:

- General contractor
- Subcontractor
- Fabrication shop
- Materials supplier
- Manufacturers (doors, windows, etc.)
- Developer/development corporation
- School district or higher education physical plant or facilities department
- Facilities department for a private corporation
- Military construction battalion (e.g. Navy Seabees)
- Disaster relief efforts
- Nonprofits (e.g. Habitat for Humanity, Community Development Corporation, Youth Corps, religious/multi-denominational development corporations, neighborhood housing services)

#### TYPES OF CONSTRUCTION WORK

Qualifying construction activities include “hands-on” experience working in a variety of scenarios including, but not limited to:

- Building layout
- Framing
- Roofing
- Concrete and masonry
- Painting and finishing
- Drywall and plastering
- Flooring
- Tile setting
- Wiring and equipment installation
- Ductwork mechanical equipment installation
- Plumbing and fixture installation
- Site clearing and preparation
- Backhoe operation, grading, etc.

#### APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION WORK

An AXP supervisor who meets the requirements of direct supervision and is experienced in the activity being performed (e.g. foreman, project manager, etc.) must certify your Construction Work experience. Your AXP supervisor does not have to be licensed to certify your work in this opportunity.

### DESIGN COMPETITIONS

You may earn up to **320 hours for completion and submission of a design competition entry** outside of a recognized employment setting or academic requirement.

Competitions completed for a firm while employed at that firm count for AXP credit under the related experience setting.

The design competition must be completed under the supervision of a mentor and meet the following criteria:

- Align to at least one of the competencies as described in the experience areas
- Be for a “building” or “planning” project
- Be a formally structured competition with specified submission requirements
- Sponsored by a recognized business entity, governmental agency, or professional association
- You must be appropriately credited on the competition entry

### WORK PRODUCT

You must retain copies of all documentation related to design competitions completed for AXP credit for a period of at least three years beyond the date the experience is approved by your mentor.

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- You must upload a complete [Design Competition Verification Form](#) to the online reporting system.
- The competition entry must be completed and submitted in compliance with the published design competition requirements.

### EXPECTATIONS OF THE AXP PARTICIPANT

- Select appropriate competition with mentor approval
- Develop competition entry
- Review work with mentor on a regular basis
- Submit competition entry
- Complete the verification form
- Document experience through the online reporting system and upload the verification form

### EXPECTATIONS OF MENTOR

- Approve competition selection
- Review competition work with AXP participant on a regular basis
- Review final competition entry prior to submission



### CSI CERTIFICATIONS: CCS & CCCA

Whether or not you are employed, you may earn hours for completing the following CSI certifications:

- **CSI Certified Construction Specifier (CCS):** 40 hours in Project Planning & Design for passing the CCS certification.
- **CSI Certified Construction Contract Administrator (CCCA):** 40 hours in Construction & Evaluation for passing the CCCA certification.

#### SUBMITTING CSI CERTIFICATION

*You must upload the CSI certificate documenting completion of the program.*

*Once submitted, the CSI Certification is reviewed and approved by NCARB.*

Information regarding the Construction Specifications Institute is available at [www.csinet.org](http://www.csinet.org).

### NCARB'S PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT CE SERIES

Each course in NCARB's Professional Conduct CE Series is worth between 1-2.5 continuing education hours in HSW. You may complete all courses for a total of **10 hours toward the Practice Management area** of the AXP.

NCARB's Continuum Education courses are written by experts in their fields and explore topics relevant to architectural practice. They may be completed by architects to satisfy their continuing education requirements or by licensure candidates for AXP credit. If you complete an NCARB CE course for AXP hours, you will not be eligible to repeat the CE course for continuing education credit for license renewal.

#### DOCUMENTING NCARB'S PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT CE SERIES

- Take and pass each course's quiz. The quizzes will be available to you in your NCARB Record.
- Individuals who do not pass the quizzes may retake them as necessary.
- You will automatically earn AXP hours upon passing each CE course's quiz.

AXP participants can access our [Professional Conduct CE Series](#) at no charge through their NCARB Record.

### CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR HEALTH SAFETY WELFARE (HSW)

You may earn up to **20 hours per experience area** by completing validated continuing education resources or programs that qualify for HSW, as defined by the [NCARB Continuing Education Guidelines](#). Accrediting or reporting organizations must be pre-approved by NCARB. One HSW learning unit earns one AXP hour.

Self-reported continuing education is not eligible for AXP credit.

To view a list of current approved continuing education accrediting and reporting organizations and learn more about the process for submitting experience earned through this opportunity, [visit NCARB's website](#).

## Best Practices for Completing the AXP Through Documenting Hours

When learning about an architecture firm, make sure the firm has opportunities for you to gain experience in all of the competencies and areas necessary to complete the AXP.

While working, have regular meetings with your supervisor to go over your progress in completing the AXP and develop a plan to finish the program in a timely manner.

### THINGS TO DISCUSS

- *How often should you be reporting hours to your AXP supervisor*
- *Upcoming projects and experience opportunities that would help you finish the AXP*
- *Experience opportunities in the office*

Record your hours daily using the “weekly” reporting format and submit your hours to your AXP supervisor in blocks of two months or less. These shorter blocks allow you to keep better records of your progress and allow you to make adjustments with your supervisor as needed.

Never leave employment at a firm prior to making sure your AXP supervisor approves all your experience gained under their supervision. When you are no longer working for a firm, it can become more difficult to contact your former supervisor about hours you have submitted.

Do not copy your timesheet hours into your AXP experience report. The AXP is not a measurement of the hours you spend at work. In order to successfully complete the program, you must gain experience developing the competencies listed in each of the [six experience areas](#). If your office work falls outside of the AXP requirements, then those hours should not be documented for AXP (e.g. traveling to a job site).

**Tip:** Use NCARB’s [free resources](#) to help build a relationship with your supervisor.

# DOCUMENTING YOUR EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE AXP PORTFOLIO

This method of documenting AXP experience is meant for experienced professionals who have worked for firms in the past and are currently unable to complete the AXP due to the reporting requirement. Through the portfolio, you will submit to your supervisor/mentor exhibits of completed work to demonstrate competency in each of the AXP Portfolio's 96 tasks.

To complete the AXP through this process, you will need to meet **all** the AXP requirements through the portfolio. In other words, you cannot complete the experience requirement through a combination of reporting hours and the AXP Portfolio. You can still participate in the portfolio option if you have submitted hours, but they will not count toward the portfolio requirements.

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## Eligibility

To be eligible to complete the AXP through the portfolio, you must meet each of the following requirements:

- Do not hold a license to practice architecture in any of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions or Canada
- Have a minimum of two years of experience that meets the requirements of the AXP and is older than five years, as defined in [employment history](#)
- Have a current [architect supervisor](#) who meets the requirements to approve your portfolio
- All experience must have occurred post high school graduation or an established equivalent

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# Overview of Steps Toward Completing AXP Portfolio

## 1. Complete the [AXP Portfolio eligibility review application](#).

- a. In order for NCARB to determine if you are eligible for this program, you will need to:
  - i. Identify your [architect supervisor](#).
  - ii. List all past work experiences from high school graduation to present. You do not need an active NCARB record for the application.

## 2. Set up your NCARB Record.

- a. Document your employment history.

If NCARB determines that you are eligible to participate in the AXP Portfolio, you will need to log in to your NCARB Record to document your employment history. If you do not have an NCARB Record, you will need to establish one and notify your NCARB AXP Portfolio eligibility reviewer before proceeding to the next step.

To document your employment history, navigate to your NCARB Record, go to the experience tab, and report past employment history from high school graduation to present via experience reports.

**Note:** Report only work experiences as defined in the employment requirement. You will report using the duration only reporting format. You may submit these reports to your AXP Portfolio architect supervisor. Once all applicable employment history has been approved, notify your NCARB AXP Portfolio eligibility reviewer.

- b. Your AXP Portfolio architect supervisor will need to complete the designated training.

## 3. Receive eligibility.

NCARB will complete a final AXP Portfolio eligibility review. If we have questions, we will contact you. Otherwise, your NCARB AXP Portfolio eligibility reviewer will grant you access to the AXP Portfolio documentation system.

## 4. Complete the AXP Portfolio requirements.

- a. Every AXP Portfolio will require at least one exhibit that demonstrates your experience and competency in each task. From the AXP Portfolio documentation system, you will be able to upload exhibits and assign your exhibits to the AXP Portfolio.
- b. Your AXP Portfolio architect supervisor will review your exhibits and determine if you have demonstrated competent performance for each of the tasks. Your AXP Portfolio architect supervisor may request that you provide additional exhibits.
- c. Once your AXP Portfolio architect supervisor confirms that you have demonstrated competent performance for each of the tasks, you will have completed the AXP Portfolio and satisfied NCARB's experience requirement.

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## AXP Portfolio Supervisor Requirements

### CURRENT ARCHITECT SUPERVISOR

If you are currently working for an architect, this person must serve as your AXP Portfolio supervisor.

Your supervisor needs to meet the following requirements:

- Have an active license to practice architecture in one of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions for a minimum of six (6) months
- Have had a working relationship with you for a minimum of six (6) months

### ARCHITECT MENTOR

If you are not currently working for an architect, your architect mentor may act as your AXP Portfolio supervisor to review and approve your portfolio.

Your mentor needs to meet the following requirements:

- Have an active license to practice architecture in one of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions for a minimum of one (1) year
- Have known you for a minimum of one (1) year

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## Exhibits

You will demonstrate competency in each of the 96 AXP Portfolio tasks through examples of your work, called exhibits. Exhibits will typically be PDFs and/or images of drawings, certificates, written documents, etc.

You will need to have at least one exhibit associated with each AXP Portfolio task. However, one exhibit can be associated with multiple tasks.

You can view a list of potential exhibits for each task on the [NCARB website](#). This list is just a resource and not meant to be a requirement.

Keep in mind, submitted exhibits should be from documents you have created, managed, or helped develop.

The exhibits need to be related to the task and development of competency. If you are not certain of which documents to use, please consult with your AXP Portfolio architect supervisor.

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## AXP Portfolio Tasks

### PRACTICE MANAGEMENT TASKS

- ☐ Adhere to ethical standards and codes of professional conduct
- ☐ Develop professional and leadership skills within firm
- ☐ Comply with laws and regulations governing the practice of architecture
- ☐ Prepare proposals for services in response to client requirements
- ☐ Prepare final procurement and contract documents
- ☐ Participate in community activities that may provide opportunities or design of facilities that reflect community needs
- ☐ Understand implications of project delivery technologies
- ☐ Develop procedures for responding to contractor requests (Requests for Information)
- ☐ Participate in professional development activities that offer exchanges with other design professionals
- ☐ Prepare marketing documents that accurately communicate firm's experience and capabilities
- ☐ Understand implications of policies and procedures to ensure supervision of design work by architect in responsible charge/control
- ☐ Establish procedures for documenting project decisions
- ☐ Maintain positive work environment within firm that facilitates cooperation, teamwork, and staff morale
- ☐ Develop procedures for responding to changes in project scope
- ☐ Develop and maintain effective and productive relationships with clients
- ☐ Establish procedures to process documentation during contract administration

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT TASKS

- ☐ Participate in pre-construction, pre-installation, and regular progress meetings with design team
- ☐ Determine design fee budget
- ☐ Coordinate design work of consultants
- ☐ Collaborate with stakeholders during design process to maintain design intent and comply with owner specifications
- ☐ Determine project schedule
- ☐ Coordinate design work of in-house team members
- ☐ Understand implications of project delivery methods
- ☐ Prepare Architect-Consultant Agreement
- ☐ Prepare written communications related to design ideas, project documentation, and contracts
- ☐ Assist client in determining delivery method for construction of project
- ☐ Maintain compliance with established milestones
- ☐ Prepare Owner-Architect Agreement
- ☐ Assist Owner in obtaining necessary permits and approvals
- ☐ Perform constructability review to determine buildability, bid ability, and construction sequencing of proposed project
- ☐ Conduct periodic progress meetings with design and project team
- ☐ Establish methods for Architect-Client communication based on project scope of work
- ☐ Identify changes in project scope that require additional services
- ☐ Manage modifications to the construction contract
- ☐ Manage information exchange during construction
- ☐ Perform constructability reviews throughout the design process
- ☐ Perform quality control reviews throughout the documentation process
- ☐ Define roles and responsibilities of team members
- ☐ Determine scope of services
- ☐ Manage project-specific bidding process
- ☐ Monitor performance of design team consultants
- ☐ Evaluate appropriateness of building information modeling (BIM) for proposed project
- ☐ Present design concept to stakeholders
- ☐ Submit schedule of Architect's services to Owner for each phase
- ☐ Resolve conflicts that may arise during design and construction process
- ☐ Prepare staffing plan to meet project goals
- ☐ Manage implementation of sustainability criteria
- ☐ Assist client in selecting contractors

### PROGRAMMING & ANALYSIS TASKS

- ☐ Determine impact of applicable zoning and development ordinances to determine project constraints
- ☐ Gather information about community concerns and issues that may impact proposed project
- ☐ Analyze existing site conditions to determine impact on facility layout
- ☐ Evaluate results of feasibility studies to determine project's financial viability
- ☐ Determine impact of environmental, zoning, and other regulations on site
- ☐ Establish sustainability goals affecting building performance
- ☐ Prepare diagrams illustrating spatial relationships and functional adjacencies
- ☐ Establish project design goals
- ☐ Prepare site analysis diagrams to document existing conditions, features, infrastructure, and regulatory requirements
- ☐ Consider recommendations from geotechnical studies when establishing design parameters
- ☐ Assist owner in preparing building program including list of spaces and their characteristics
- ☐ Develop conceptual budget
- ☐ Gather information about client's vision, goals, budget, and schedule to validate project scope and program
- ☐ Evaluate opportunities and constraints of alternative sites
- ☐ Assess environmental impact to formulate design decisions
- ☐ Determine impact of existing transportation infrastructure on site
- ☐ Consider results of environmental studies when developing site alternatives
- ☐ Review legal documents related to site to determine project constraints



### PROJECT PLANNING & DESIGN TASKS

- ☐ Perform building code analysis
- ☐ Develop sustainability goals based on existing environmental conditions
- ☐ Prepare code analysis documentation
- ☐ Define requirements for site survey based on established project scope
- ☐ Select materials, finishes, and systems based on technical properties and aesthetic requirements
- ☐ Determine design parameters for building engineering systems
- ☐ Prepare design alternatives for client review
- ☐ Present design ideas to client orally
- ☐ Oversee design integration of building components and systems
- ☐ Evaluate results of feasibility studies to determine project's technical viability
- ☐ Review local, state, and federal codes for changes that may impact design and construction
- ☐ Prepare Cost of Work estimates
- ☐ Determine impact of existing utilities infrastructure on site
- ☐ Apply principles of historic preservation for projects involving building restoration or renovation
- ☐ Understand implications of evolving sustainable design strategies and technologies
- ☐ Design landscape elements for site
- ☐ Develop mitigation options to address adverse site conditions

### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & DOCUMENTATION TASKS

- ☐ Communicate design ideas to the client graphically
- ☐ Prepare submittals for regulatory approval
- ☐ Communicate design ideas to client with two-dimensional (2-D) computer aided design software
- ☐ Select furniture, fixtures, and equipment that meet client's design requirements and needs
- ☐ Communicate design ideas to the client using hand drawings
- ☐ Communicate design ideas to client with three-dimensional (3-D) computer aided design software
- ☐ Update Cost of Work estimates

### CONSTRUCTION & EVALUATION TASKS

- ☐ Review shop drawings and submittals during construction for conformance with design intent
- ☐ Respond to Contractor Requests for Information
- ☐ Complete field reports to document field observations from construction site visit
- ☐ Review results from field reports, third-party inspections, and other test results for conformance with contract documents
- ☐ Review Application and Certificate for Payment
- ☐ Manage project close-out procedures and documentation

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## Employment History

You will create a history of work experience in your NCARB Record. Reports created to document work history for AXP Portfolio eligibility only need to be submitted as “duration only” reports. If you have already submitted experience reports, you will need to fill in the gaps to show eligibility for the AXP Portfolio.

The online reporting system will require a work setting and a supervisor name. Your AXP Portfolio architect supervisor may approve past “duration only” experience. Only include work experiences that meet the requirements of experience setting A or experience setting O.

As part of your eligibility for the AXP Portfolio, you will need at least two years of full-time experience that meets the requirements of the AXP gained outside of a five-year window from the date you request eligibility for the AXP Portfolio:

- Minimum of one year of [Experience Setting A](#).
- Up to one year of any combination of the opportunities from Experience Setting O below:
  - Up to one year - [Other Work Experience Under Licensed Professionals](#)
  - Up to two months - [Design or Construction Related Employment](#)
  - Up to two months - [Construction Work](#)

Part-time experience will accrue at 50 percent toward the two-year requirement. Less than part-time will be evaluated depending on amount of experience. You may need to provide a reference for each of the work experiences listed in your Record.

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## Best Practices for Completing the AXP through the Portfolio

This process is only for people who have a body of experience that fulfills the AXP but is older than five years, who are having difficulties getting their experience approved by the supervisor they worked for at the time.

It is best to collect exhibits for each of the tasks and make a plan to finish this process prior to starting. Talk with your supervisor/mentor about expectations for your AXP Portfolio before submitting your body of experience.

Some AXP Portfolio supervisors prefer the exhibits have descriptive text in the documents you upload that states how this document demonstrates competency for the associated tasks.

# NEXT STEP: EARN YOUR LICENSE

The AXP is only one component that leads to licensure in the 55 NCARB jurisdictions. Make sure you are able to meet the education and examination requirements as well. For details on how to gain licensure, view the [NCARB licensing requirements tool](#).

Once you have received your license and it's time to renew your NCARB Record, be sure to answer "yes" to the question: "Have you received a license to practice architecture since last renewal?" This will put you in the queue to get your Record evaluated for NCARB certification. For some jurisdictions, NCARB will need to send verification of your license. After we have all the necessary documents, your Record will be evaluated to determine if it meets the requirements for NCARB certification per the [Certification Guidelines](#).

If you want to start this process prior to your next NCARB renewal, [contact NCARB customer service](#) after receiving your license.