NCARB

International Architect Path to NCARB Certification

MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

About NCARB

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) is a nonprofit organization comprised of the architectural licensing boards of 55 U.S. states and territories. NCARB's membership consists 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 initial licensure, continuing education, and license renewal—as well as establishing the requirements for the NCARB Certificate in support of reciprocal licensure within the United States.

NCARB Mission Statement

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

Architect Licensing Boards

There is no national license to practice architecture within the United States. While NCARB works to create national standards and programs for licensure, licenses to practice architecture are issued and regulated individually by the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Architects must be licensed by the jurisdiction(s) in which they are practicing.

Each of these 55 U.S. jurisdictions has an architecture board responsible for issuing licenses; regulating the practice of architecture within its borders; and protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare. Together, the 55 jurisdictions constitute NCARB's membership and can choose which programs to adopt as a requirement for licensure, but they all include three core components: education, experience, and examination.

About This Manual

To become an architect in a U.S. jurisdiction, most candidates must complete several steps designed to build skills and ensure they can competently design buildings that protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. The common path followed by most U.S. architects is detailed below.

NCARB also offers additional pathways to licensure that can be used in some U.S. jurisdictions. For many architects who earned a license or registration in a country outside of the United States, NCARB's International Architect Path to Certification provides a more streamlined approach than the standard path. This manual provides a detailed overview of the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification for individuals who are interested in or are pursuing licensure in the United States through the International Architect Path.

Core Components for Licensure in the United States

EDUCATION

For most candidates, earning an architecture degree is the first step toward getting licensed. Most jurisdictions require that applicants for licensure graduate from an architecture program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) or its Canadian equivalent.

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) establishes the criteria by which professional degree programs in architecture are evaluated and accredits programs that meet those standards.

EXPERIENCE

Most jurisdictions require—and all accept—completion of the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) by earning and reporting a variety of supervised real-world experiences. The AXP is divided into areas that reflect the phases of a typical architecture project. The program also identifies 16 competencies across those areas; candidates must develop their knowledge and skills in each of the 16 competencies. To complete the program, candidates must submit

experience reports documenting a minimum of 3,740 hours of experience, and a supervisor (typically a licensed architect) must approve the reports and certify that the candidate has developed competency in the required areas.

EXAMINATION

The Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) 5.0 is a multi-part test composed of six divisions that align with the practice areas identified in the AXP. Each U.S. jurisdiction requires the successful completion of the ARE. The exam assesses a candidate's knowledge and skill in areas of architecture related to health, safety, and welfare.

NCARB Certification

The NCARB Certificate is a professional credential indicating that an architect has demonstrated and met the national standards for certification. NCARB recommends to all U.S. licensing authorities that NCARB Certificate holders be granted licensure without further qualification.

Architects who are licensed by a U.S. jurisdiction can apply for certification *after* receiving their first license. Architects who are licensed outside of the United States and pursuing the **International Architect Path must apply for the Certificate *prior* to receiving an initial U.S. license**. The Certificate is then used to apply for licensure in a U.S. jurisdiction. This process is described further on page 7.

Reciprocity

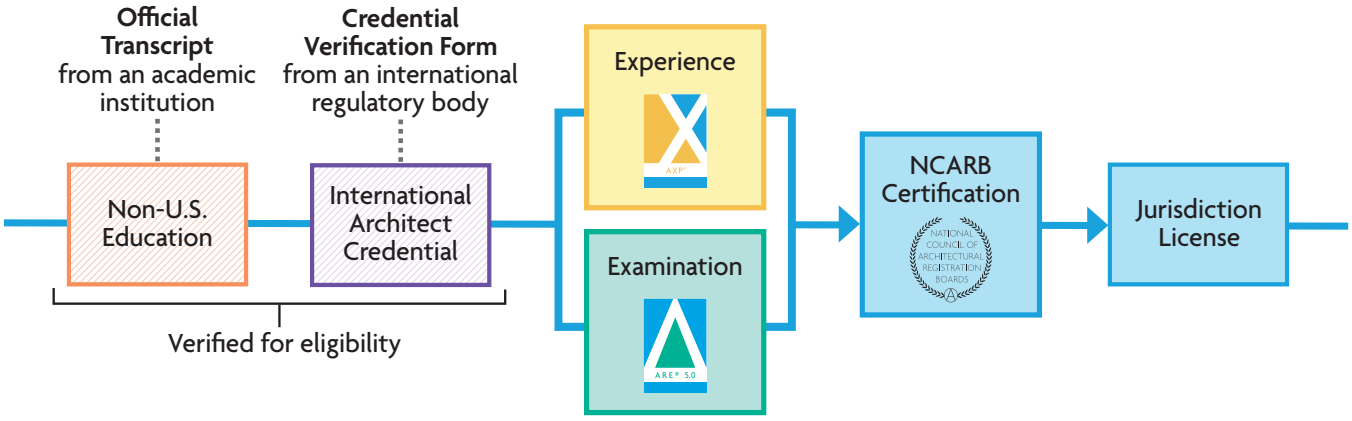
Most architects are licensed to practice in more than one jurisdiction, which can provide job flexibility and security. This can be accomplished through "reciprocity," an agreement among the 55 U.S. jurisdictions—and some countries—to recognize licenses issued by other boards.

NCARB was founded to facilitate reciprocity, and the easiest way to apply for a reciprocal license is through the NCARB Certificate. In some jurisdictions, architects with an NCARB Certificate can pursue work before earning a reciprocal license in that jurisdiction. Always check local regulations before pursuing work in a jurisdiction in which you are not licensed, and note that architects can only provide professional services in jurisdictions where they're licensed.

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECT PATH?

About the International Architect Path

If you are a licensed architect outside of the United States or Canada, you may be able to pursue an NCARB Certificate by verifying your license and completing two programs: the Architectural Experience Program (AXP) and the Architect Registration Examination (ARE). After earning an NCARB Certificate, you can use this credential to apply for a license in a U.S. jurisdiction that accepts an NCARB Certificate issued through the International Architect Path.



Note: No National License

There is no national license to practice architecture in the United States. The 55 U.S. licensing boards regulate architecture and issue licenses specific to their jurisdiction. Successful completion of the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification will allow you to apply for a license in a U.S. jurisdiction that accepts this path.

How do I know if a jurisdiction will accept the International Architect Path?

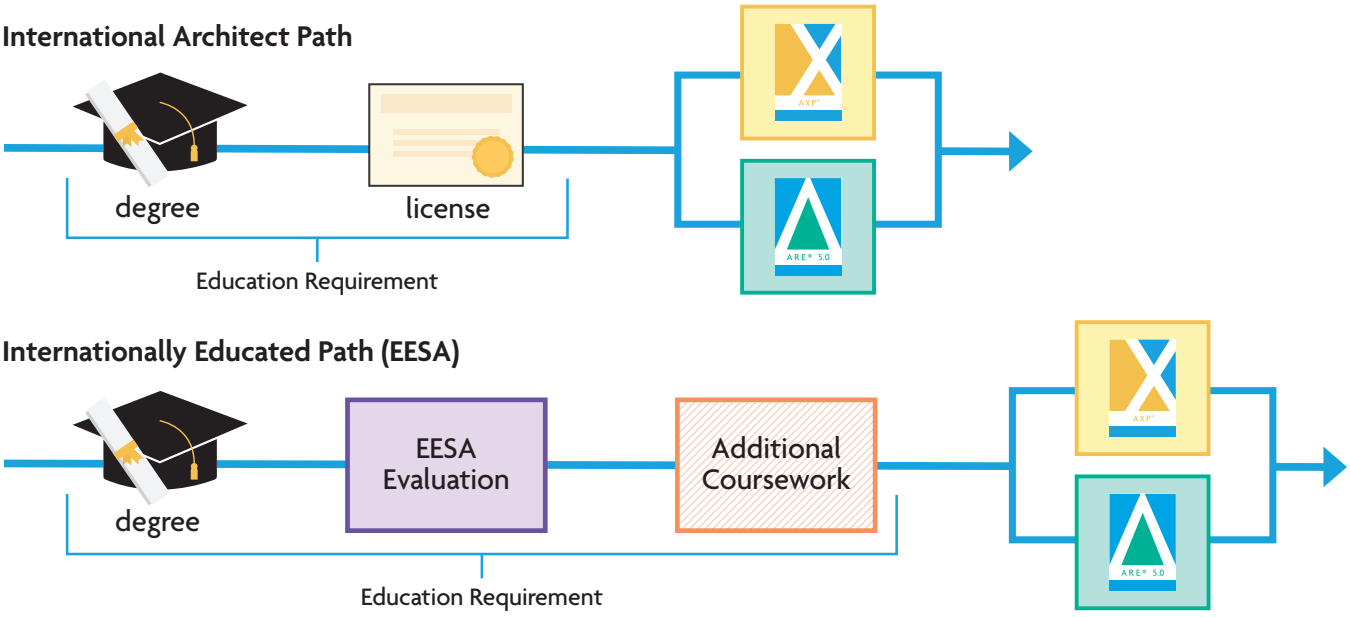
Use the Licensure Requirements Tool on the NCARB website to find out if the jurisdiction will accept the International Architect Path for a reciprocal license. See complete instructions and illustrations on page 11)

International Architect Path vs. EESA

The International Architect Path is only for individuals who hold an active license in good standing to practice architecture in a country other than the United States or Canada. If you are determined to be eligible for the International Architect Path, it is almost always the easiest and least costly path.

The Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) is not required for the International Architect Path. EESA is part of a different path for individuals who hold a degree from a university outside the United State or Canada but are not licensed to practice architecture. It is also an option for anyone who is determined to be ineligible for the International Architect Path. The EESA path for individuals educated outside the U.S. is usually more costly because it requires an EESA evaluation, for which the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) charges a fee, and because the evaluation may determine that you need to take additional university or continuing education courses to achieve the equivalent of an accredited education.

Applicants pursuing the International Architect Path to certification do not need an EESA evaluation to determine eligibility. Note that both International Architect and Internationally Educated paths require completion of the AXP and ARE. To pursue the International Architect Path, follow the instructions on page 11.



MEETING THE NCARB EDUCATION REQUIREMENT THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECT OR INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED PATHS

Each of these paths provide a means to fulfill the education requirement for the NCARB Certificate.

- **International Architect Path to Certificate:**

  Proof of education + Credential Verification form leads to the NCARB Certificate, which then leads to a reciprocal license in a U.S. jurisdiction.

- **Internationally Educated Path to First License (varies by state):**

  Evaluation of education + additional coursework fulfills education requirement for initial license (varies by jurisdiction)—once you are licensed, you can earn an NCARB Certificate.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Qualifications

To be eligible for the International Architect Path, you must meet all of the following requirements:

INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIAL/LICENSE REQUIREMENT

- ☐ Your non-U.S. license must be active and in good standing at the point of application.
- ☐ Your non-U.S. license must allow unlimited practice—the design of all types and sizes of buildings.
- ☐ Your country must have a system for tracking disciplinary action for architects.
- ☐ You must have no record of disciplinary action.

REQUIRED EDUCATION

- ☐ You must hold a recognized education credential (completed academic degree) in an architecture program that leads to a license/credential for the unlimited practice of architecture in the non-U.S. country. An official transcript of your educational record must be sent directly to NCARB from the school.

All requirements are explained in the *Certification Guidelines*.

Fees

There is an initial fee to establish your NCARB Record, which covers your initial application and maintains your active Record for one year. You must pay this fee before we can review your application and determine your eligibility for the International Architect Path.

If you are made eligible for the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification, you will be required to pay the Certificate application fee. Please refer to the Fees page of the NCARB website for the current cost of establishing and maintaining your NCARB Record.

All fees are subject to change and are non-refundable unless otherwise noted.

Overview: Steps to Complete the International Architect Path

1. Identify the jurisdiction where you would like to be licensed and confirm that jurisdiction's licensure requirements allow for use of the International Architect Path
2. Express interest in the International Architect Path within your online NCARB Record
3. Apply for eligibility by having your official academic transcript and completed Credential Verification Form submitted to NCARB

If you are determined to be eligible, you must then:

4. Pay certification application balance
5. Complete the ARE
6. Complete the AXP
7. Request updated CVF to be submitted to NCARB
8. Become certified!

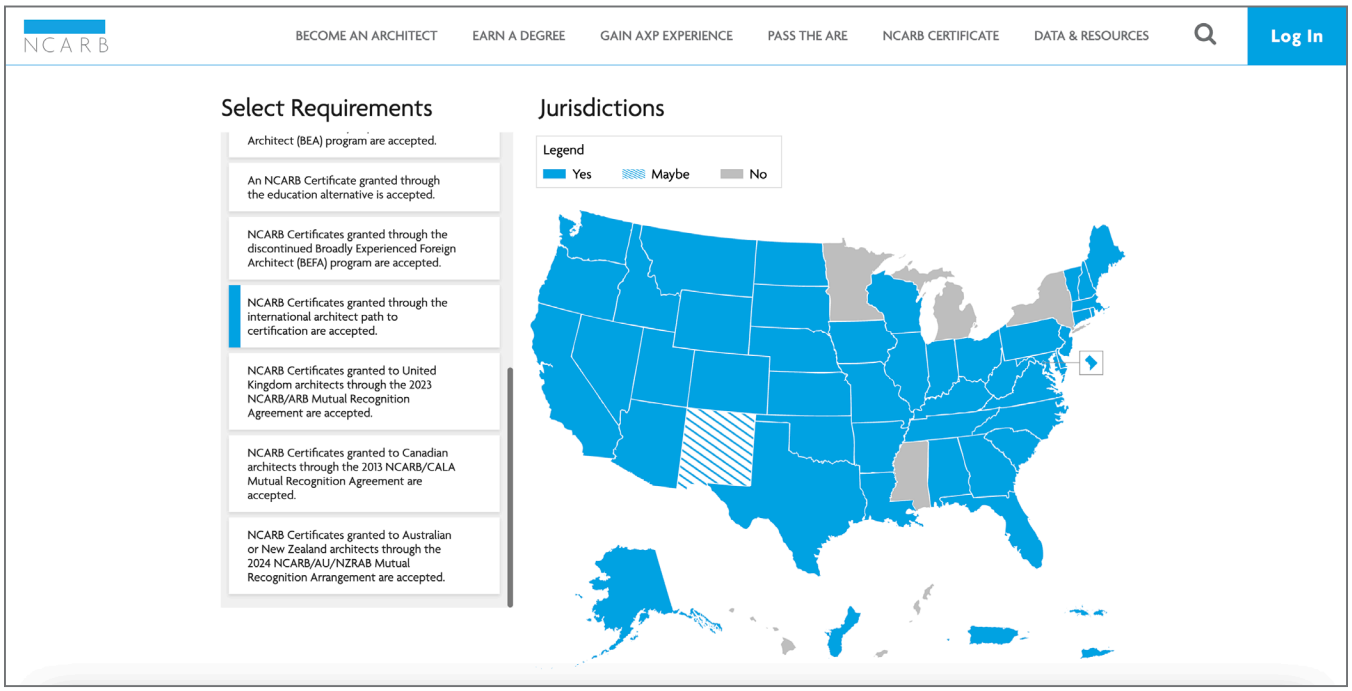
Each of these steps will be described in greater detail. After you have become certified, you may apply for reciprocal registration/licensure by requesting a transmittal of your Record to a U.S. jurisdiction that accepts NCARB Certificates obtained through the International Architect Path.

1. CONFIRM JURISDICTION LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS - LICENSING REQUIREMENTS TOOL

Before starting the process, use the Licensing Requirements Tool on the NCARB website to confirm that the U.S. jurisdiction where you want to earn a license accepts NCARB Certificates obtained through the International Architect Path.

To do so:

Select "Reciprocal Registration Tab" and select "NCARB Certificates granted through the International Architect Path are accepted" under "Requirements").



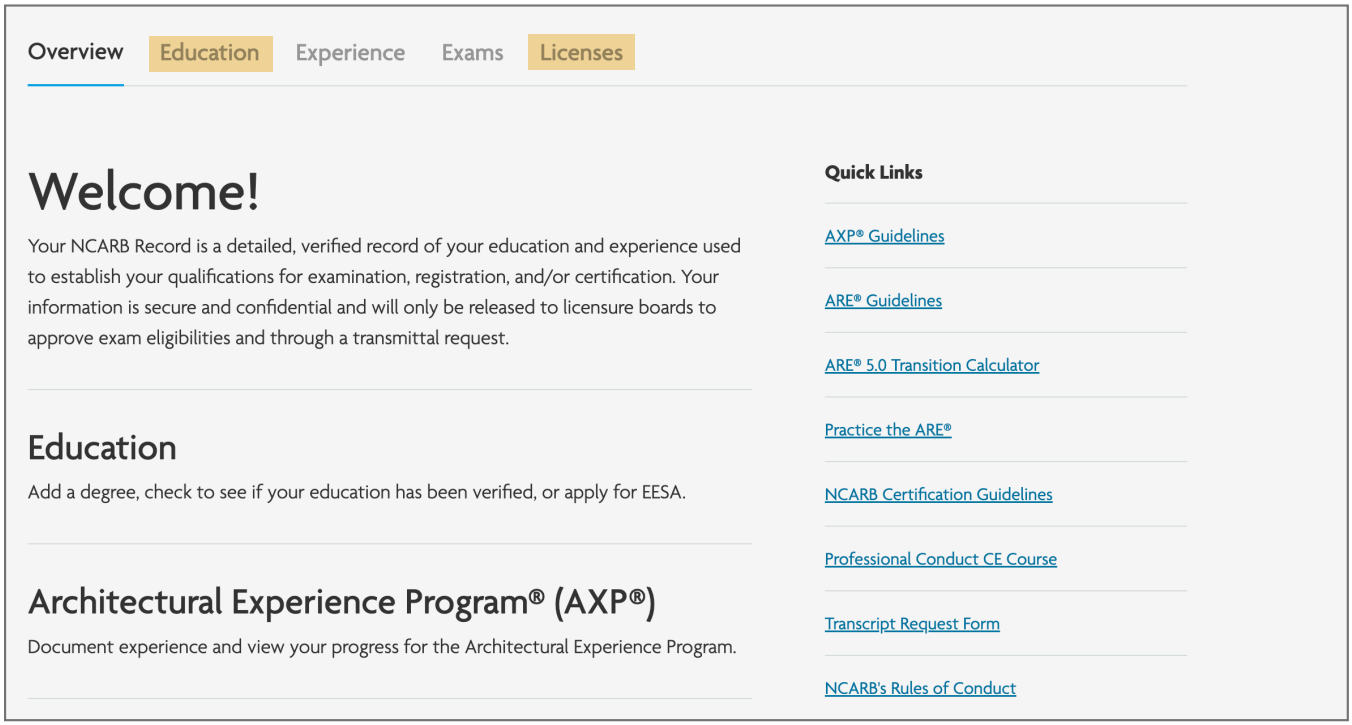
Be sure to also check directly with the jurisdiction(s) in which you seek a reciprocal license to ensure they will accept an NCARB Certificate obtained through the International Architect Path to Certification, as their rules are subject to change.

2. NCARB RECORD: EXPRESSING INTEREST

Once you confirm that the jurisdiction where you would like to be licensed accepts NCARB Certificates obtained through the International Architect Path, you will need to establish an NCARB Record, which is a verified account of your professional history. To start your NCARB Record, login to My NCARB, create a free account, and then click "Establish Record" to add your paid Record service. Read detailed instructions on the NCARB website.

Once you have established a Record, you can express interest in the International Architect Path by completing the following steps:

1. Add your international architecture license under the "Licenses" tab of your NCARB Record
2. You will then receive a message in the overview screen of your NCARB Record, where you will have the option to indicate interest in the International Architect Path to Certification. Use this message to indicate your interest.
3. To streamline next steps, add your education under the "Education" tab of your NCARB Record.



3. COMPLETE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Once you have indicated interest, NCARB will determine if you are eligible for the International Architect Path. In order to determine your eligibility for the International Architect Path, NCARB requires your:

1. Official academic transcript(s) (note: evaluations will not be accepted in lieu of transcripts—please see details on page 14).
2. Credential Verification Form.

Note: Your documents can be submitted in any order. However, it is required that your documentation must be submitted directly to NCARB by your university and credentialing authority in English. NCARB cannot accept or review documents sent by you.

Credential Verification Form

A completed Credential Verification Form (CVF) is necessary to verify that you hold an active international registration/license/credential in good standing to practice architecture outside the United States and Canada. After the CVF is received, it will be verified to confirm that your registration/license/credential meets the requirements of the program. NCARB will deny an application that includes false or insufficient information.

Credential Verification Forms must be submitted directly to NCARB by the credentialing authority either electronically or by physical mail.

- Email: internationalarchitect@ncarb.org
- Mailed to:

  NCARB C/O International Fulfillment Corporation
  7100 Old Landover Rd Suite 500
  Landover, MD 20785

Note: During this stage, your CVF is only valid for up to one year from the submission date, regardless of your license expiration date. If your CVF expires before NCARB determines your eligibility, an updated CVF will be required. If you are made eligible for the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification, an updated CVF will also be required upon completion of the program and before you can be issued an NCARB Certificate. In addition, the licensing board that you are seeking licensure from may also request an updated CVF at any time prior to licensure; therefore, your non-U.S. license must remain active until you obtain a license in a U.S. jurisdiction. A "current license" may include a license that is eligible for reinstatement upon re-establishment of residency and/or payment of fees." For more information, please contact internationalarchitect@ncarb.org.

Transcript (Education) Requirements

The official academic transcript(s) from an architecture program that led to your registration/license/credential are required to determine eligibility for the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification.

For transcripts to be accepted for eligibility review by NCARB, they must be:

- Submitted in English by the issuing university.

  If your university does not issue transcripts in English, they will need to be translated by a certified translation service. Please see the translation requirements described below.

- Sent directly to NCARB by the university.

  By email:

  Send to transcripts@ncarb.org. If possible, include the applicant's NCARB Record number in the subject line.

  By mail or shipping service:

  NCARB C/O International Fulfillment Corporation
  7100 Old Landover Rd Suite 500
  Landover, MD 20785

  Mailed packages must be received with no evidence of tampering, with the transcript in the original unopened university envelope. Processing mailed transcripts may take additional time.

Transcript Requirements

Submitted transcripts must be complete. Academic transcripts must include:

- Applicant's name
  - If the name does not match what is listed on your NCARB Record, official name change documentation will be required before verification can be completed.
- School name
- Attendance dates
- Courses taken and grades
- Degree title and degree completion date
  - If transcript does not include degree title or date, the university must provide an official letter or statement with this information

Note: NCARB does not accept course descriptions nor equivalency/evaluation reports. NCARB requires your academic transcript, which must include the information listed above.

Translation Requirements

If the Credential Verification Form cannot be completed in English or official academic transcripts are not issued in English, the documents will need to be translated by a certified translator.

Certified translations can only be accepted through official and verifiable sources such as the university, legal, notary, embassy, or other certified translation services. These providers do not have to be based in the United States or certified by the American Translators Association (ATA);

however, all translations must be provided on official letterhead, along with copies of the original documents. Translators must also submit a statement of confirmation that includes the information listed below. Please use NCARB's Translator Statement of Confirmation Form to submit this information.

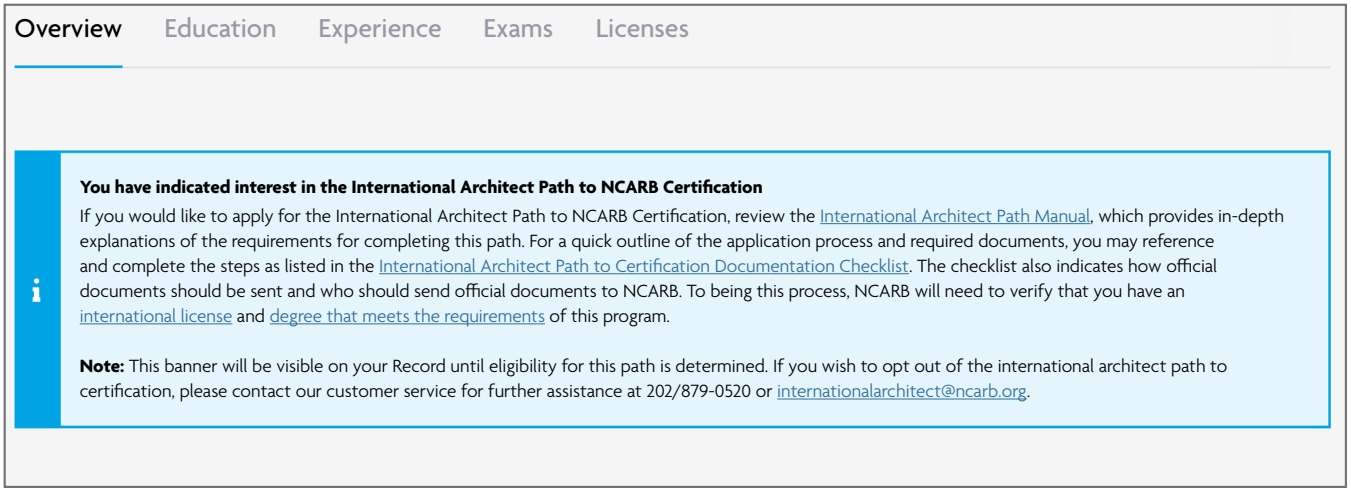
- Official and verifiable contact information including the translator's name, address, email, and phone number.
- How the transcript was sent to their office for translation. This confirmation should include the name of the university or entity that sent the transcript to their office for translation.
- The method in which the transcript was sent (i.e., postal mail, in-person delivery, or via email).
- If a hard copy was received by the translator, whether it was in the official and original sealed envelope.
- The translator should also confirm that the translation was completed using the official document received.

Additional information for submitting translated documents may be found here.

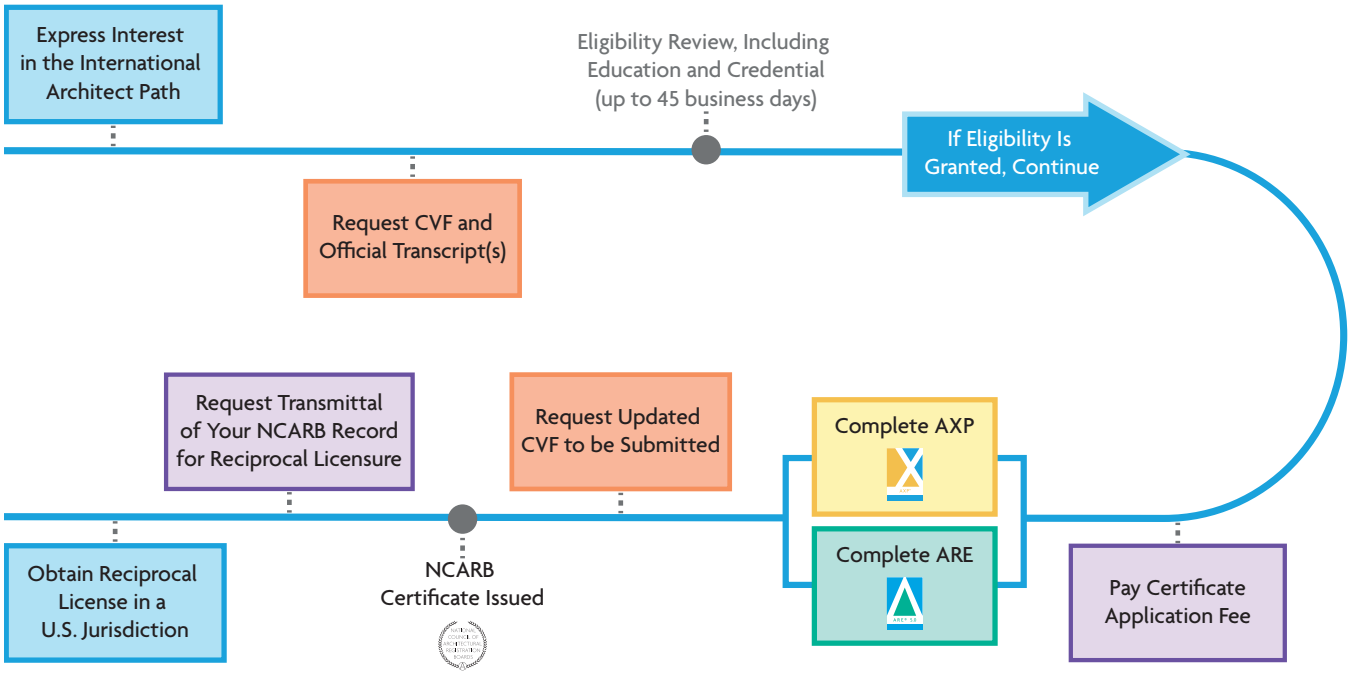
Eligibility Review

Once documents have been received by NCARB, please allow up to 45 business days for documents to be reviewed to determine your eligibility for this path. During the eligibility review, NCARB may be in contact with any third party translation services you used, your credentialing authority, and/or your university for additional information or clarification.

The overview message that states "documents are required" will remain visible in your NCARB Record until your eligibility for this path has been determined.



Note: All eligibility documents are reviewed in the order received and applicants will be updated on the status of their application after the final review is complete.



Eligibility Granted: Pay the Certification Application Fee, Complete Experience and Examination Requirements

The International Architect Path provides a means to fulfill the education requirement for certification. If you are made eligible for the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification, you still must satisfy NCARB's experience and examination requirements by completing the AXP and ARE.

Note: You will be required to pay the Certificate Application Fee before you can begin scheduling the exam and before the AXP's reporting policy is waived from your Record.

COMPLETING THE AXP

To complete the International Architect Path to licensure, you will need to complete the Architectural Experience Program (AXP), as described in the *AXP Guidelines*.

Previous non-U.S. work experience can often be counted under one of the experience settings. If you worked for a U.S.- or Canada-licensed architect, those experiences may qualify as "setting A." You many also earn up to a maximum of 1,860 hours for work completed in a country outside the U.S. under the supervision of an architect licensed in that country, under "setting O."

Eligible Applicants: Waived AXP Reporting Policy

As an applicant made eligible for the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification, the AXP's reporting policy is waived and you are not subject to reporting qualified experience for 100% credit in the timeframe listed above. Therefore, your qualified international experience, up to 1,860 hours, will count for 100% credit.

Note: The AXP reporting policy will not be waived from your Record until the certification application fee is paid. If you require assistance reporting your qualified AXP hours, please contact NCARB Customer Relations for support.

For more detailed information, please review the *AXP Guidelines*.

COMPLETING THE ARE

The Architect Registration Examination (ARE) is required for the NCARB Certificate and for licensure by all U.S. jurisdictions. For detailed information on the exam, please review the *ARE Guidelines*.

Note: Before you can schedule a division of the ARE, the certification application fee must be paid. If you require assistance requesting exam eligibility, please contact NCARB Customer Relations for support.

Testing Jurisdiction

Eligible applicants for the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification will test through "NCARB" as their jurisdiction; not the U.S. jurisdiction where you are seeking to be licensed.

NEXT STEPS AFTER COMPLETING THE ARE AND AXP

Updated CVF Required

After successful completion of the ARE and AXP, you will need to request an updated CVF so NCARB can ensure that your international registration/credential/license is still active and in good standing. After receiving your updated CVF, NCARB will perform a final review of your Record for certification.

Please refer to the Credential Verification Form section above for more information.

Receiving Your NCARB Certificate

After your NCARB Record has been evaluated, you will be issued the NCARB Certificate.

The final evaluation can take up to 30 business days after completion of all requirements. Once the evaluation is complete, you will receive an email confirming you have met the requirements for certification and be issued a Certificate number.

Note: Although you have met the requirements for NCARB certification through the International Architect Path, some jurisdictions may not accept this means of certification.

You may use the Licensing Requirements Tool on our website to verify that your reciprocal licensure jurisdiction of choice accepts certification obtained through this path. For more information on navigating this tool, please see the "Confirm Jurisdiction Licensure Requirements - Licensing Requirements Tool" section.

Be sure to also confirm directly with the jurisdiction(s) in which you seek a reciprocal license to ensure they will accept an NCARB Certificate obtained through the International Architect Path to Certification as their rules are subject to change.

After being certified, you may apply for reciprocal licensure in another jurisdiction through your NCARB Record. For more information, please review the instructions online if you require assistance requesting a transmittal, please contact NCARB Customer Relations for support.

Ineligible: Other Options

Not all international applicants qualify for the International Architect Path to NCARB Certification, as there are specific credential and education requirements that must be met. For example, there may be differences in the scope of services allowed or methods of tracking disciplinary action between the United States and the country in which you are licensed. There are still potentially other options available for you to become NCARB certified, such as the Internationally Educated (EESA) or the standard path.

Licensure candidates have the option to pursue:

- Internationally Educated (EESA) Path
- Standard Path
- Jurisdiction-Specific Paths

For more information on any of the above options, please contact NCARB Customer Relations.

NCARB Contact

- internationalarchitect@ncarb.org: Contact for questions specific to this program
- customerservice@ncarb.org: Contact for questions about your NCARB Record, the AXP, or the ARE
- Customer Relations Phone: 202-879-0520
- Mailing Address:

  NCARB C/O International Fulfillment Corporation
  7100 Old Landover Rd Suite 500
  Landover, MD 20785

Forms and Links

- Documentation Checklist
- Credential Verification Form
- Translator Instructions

GLOSSARY

Credential: Registration, license, or other official document that confirms ability to lawfully practice architecture for a specific region or country.

Credentialing Authority: Organization or entity that issues and regulates credential to lawfully practice architecture.

Eligibility: The permissions granted to be able to begin completing the requirements of the program such as completing your exams or documenting your experiences.

EESA: Administered by the NAAB, the Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) compares your academic transcript to the *NCARB Education Standard* and determines whether your education meets the requirement for licensure or NCARB certification. You may need an EESA evaluation if you do not hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program. Learn more about EESA evaluations.

Member Board(s)/Jurisdiction(s): One of the 55 licensing boards which includes the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These are entities that issue licenses to practice architecture in their region.

NAAB: The NAAB (National Architectural Accrediting Board), establishes the criteria by which professional degree programs in architecture are evaluated and accredits programs that meet those standards. Most U.S. licensing boards require applicants for licensure to have graduated from a NAAB-accredited program.

NCARB Certificate: A credential that indicates the Record holder meets the national standards for licensure.

NCARB Record: Detailed, verified account of the applicant's education, experience, and examination history.

Registration/license: Official document that confirms ability to lawfully practice architecture for a specific region or country.

Translation: The process of converting the written words/text on credentialing documents such as transcripts from a university, from one language into another language.

Unlimited practice: Ability to provide any architectural services on any type of building in any state, province, territory, or other political subdivision within a country.