

YOUR GUIDE TO  
**Online Proctoring**  
and ARE 5.0

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# INTRODUCTION

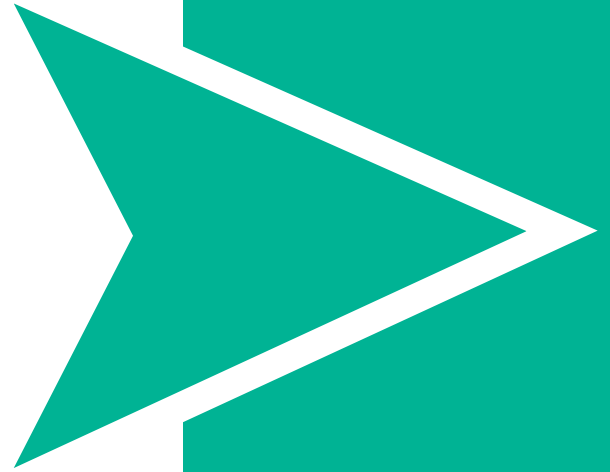
The option for candidates to take the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) via online proctoring will be offered in addition to traditional, in-person testing, which will still be available through Prometric's global network of test centers.

To enable online proctoring while maintaining the exam's essential reliability and rigor as a measure of candidate competency, several changes to ARE 5.0's navigation, timing, and policies will go into effect when online proctoring launches. These changes will impact both in-person and online exams, including in-person exams already scheduled.

The following provides additional information about the changes to ARE 5.0. Keep in mind, the exam's overall content—including the division structure, item bank, and objectives—is not changing. While candidates should familiarize themselves with the updated demo exam when it launches mid-November, candidates do not need to alter the materials they're currently studying.



# EXAM CHANGES



## ► Items Per Division Will Be Reduced

In an effort to continue to increase the efficiency of the licensure process, NCARB will reduce the total number of items candidates will see in each division of ARE 5.0.

<b>Practice Management</b> Original Number of Items <b>80</b> Updated Number of Items <b>65</b>	<b>PcM</b>	<b>Project Management</b> Original Number of Items <b>95</b> Updated Number of Items <b>75</b>	<b>PjM</b>
<b>Programming &amp; Analysis</b> Original Number of Items <b>95</b> Updated Number of Items <b>75</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>Project Planning &amp; Design</b> Original Number of Items <b>120</b> Updated Number of Items <b>100</b>	<b>PPD</b>
<b>Project Development &amp; Documentation</b> Original Number of Items <b>120</b> Updated Number of Items <b>100</b>	<b>PDD</b>	<b>Construction &amp; Evaluation</b> Original Number of Items <b>95</b> Updated Number of Items <b>75</b>	<b>CE</b>

### Key things to know:

- **The majority of items to be removed are “pre-test” items.** Each division of the ARE includes several “pretest” items—new items in the testing stage of development. These items are indistinguishable from regular items, but do not contribute to the candidate’s score. To reduce the exam’s length without impacting rigor, there will be less pretest items per division of the ARE.
- **Reducing the number of items per division will not make the exam easier** Reducing the length of the test is based upon recommendations from NCARB’s independent psychometricians, but the changes will not impact the exam’s difficulty. NCARB will establish a new cut score to ensure the ARE is a fair test of competency.

## ► Test Duration Per Division Adjusted Slightly

Changes in the number of items per division will not have a significant impact on exam timing as **candidates are being given more time per item on each division and more break time per division.**

<b>Practice Management</b> <span>PcM</span>	<b>Project Management</b> <span>PjM</span>
Original Appointment Time <b>3 HR 30 MIN</b>	Original Appointment Time <b>4 HR</b>
Original Test Duration <b>2 HR 45 MIN</b>	Original Test Duration <b>3 HR 15 MIN</b>
Updated Appointment Time <b>3 HR 20 MIN</b>	Updated Appointment Time <b>3 HR 40 MIN</b>
Updated Test Duration <b>2 HR 40 MIN</b>	Updated Test Duration <b>3 HR</b>
<b>Programming &amp; Analysis</b> <span>PA</span>	<b>Project Planning &amp; Design</b> <span>PPD</span>
Original Appointment Time <b>4 HR</b>	Original Appointment Time <b>5 HR</b>
Original Test Duration <b>3 HR 15 MIN</b>	Original Test Duration <b>4 HR 15 MIN</b>
Updated Appointment Time <b>3 HR 40 MIN</b>	Updated Appointment Time <b>5 HR</b>
Updated Test Duration <b>3 HR</b>	Updated Test Duration <b>4 HR 5 MIN</b>
<b>Project Development &amp; Documentation</b> <span>PDD</span>	<b>Construction &amp; Evaluation</b> <span>CE</span>
Original Appointment Time <b>5 HR</b>	Original Appointment Time <b>4 HR</b>
Original Test Duration <b>4 HR 15 MIN</b>	Original Test Duration <b>3 HR 15 MIN</b>
Updated Appointment Time <b>5 HR</b>	Updated Appointment Time <b>3 HR 40 MIN</b>
Updated Test Duration <b>4 HR 5 MIN</b>	Updated Test Duration <b>3 HR</b>

### Key things to know:

- **Candidates will have more time per item.** Because the reduction in the number of items is proportionally larger than the reduction in test time, candidates will have more time to consider each item.
- **Timing considers the changes to navigation and tools.** The additional time in relation to the number of items gives candidates the necessary flexibility to review items and use updated tools, such as the digital whiteboard.



## ► Optional Break Time Expanded; Items Locked When a Break is Taken

Candidates' optional break time will be expanded to 30 or 45 minutes, depending on the division. In addition, candidates will be able to use this time for multiple short breaks or one long break during their appointment.

Candidates will be able to review any previously viewed items before they take a break. **However, upon returning from a break, candidates will be unable to review or edit items seen prior to a break.** Those items will be locked for the duration of the test appointment.

Candidates are required to click the on-screen break tool anytime they take a break.

Division	Optional Break Time	
Practice Management	30 MIN	PcM
Project Management	30 MIN	PjM
Programming & Analysis	30 MIN	PA
Project Planning & Design	45 MIN	PPD
Project Development & Documentation	45 MIN	PDD
Construction & Evaluation	30 MIN	CE

### Key things to know:

- **Candidates will have more break flexibility.** The new break structure allows candidates more flexibility in terms of when and for how long to take a break, both in-person and when testing online.
- **Locking items after breaks is essential for exam security.** Because NCARB will not control the break activities of candidates who test via online proctoring, locking items maintains the exam's security.
- **Candidates should plan to review items before taking a break.** Candidates will be able to review any previously viewed items before they take a break. Currently, many candidates choose to review "flagged items" at the end of their test appointment. Candidates should adjust their testing strategy to review any flagged items prior to taking a break, since they will be unable to return to these items.



## ► NCARB Will Set New Cut Scores

Because the number of scored items is changing, NCARB will have to set a new cut score for each ARE division. NCARB and our psychometrician experts will use current cut scores as a reference when setting the new cut scores—this will minimize the time needed to set cut scores and allow NCARB to benchmark the current exam rigor.

## ► Reduced Rescheduling Fees in Effect on January 1

NCARB has not charged rescheduling fees since the COVID-19 pandemic initially shut down test centers in mid-March. NCARB will reinstate fees for rescheduling exam appointments beginning on January 1, 2021. However, NCARB has reduced rescheduling fees.

Days Before Exam Appointment	Previous Fee	Updated Fee
<b>0-3 BUSINESS DAYS</b>	<b>Rescheduling Not Permitted</b>	<b>Rescheduling Not Permitted</b>
<b>4-15 BUSINESS DAYS</b> (before Noon ET)	<b>\$80</b>	<b>\$55</b>
<b>16-30 BUSINESS DAYS</b> (before Noon ET)	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>30 OR MORE BUSINESS DAYS</b> (before Noon ET)	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

### Key things to know about the cut score process:

- NCARB does not expect pass rates to change dramatically. The changes being made to enable online proctoring are not intended to make the exam easier or harder; therefore, pass rates for the updated exam are expected to align with current pass rates.
- Score reports will be held for approximately four weeks while cut scores are set. During this time, candidates will also be unable to see provisional feedback prior to leaving the test center or online appointment. Provisional feedback will return once the cut score is set. Score reports will be released by division, as the cut scores for each division are established.

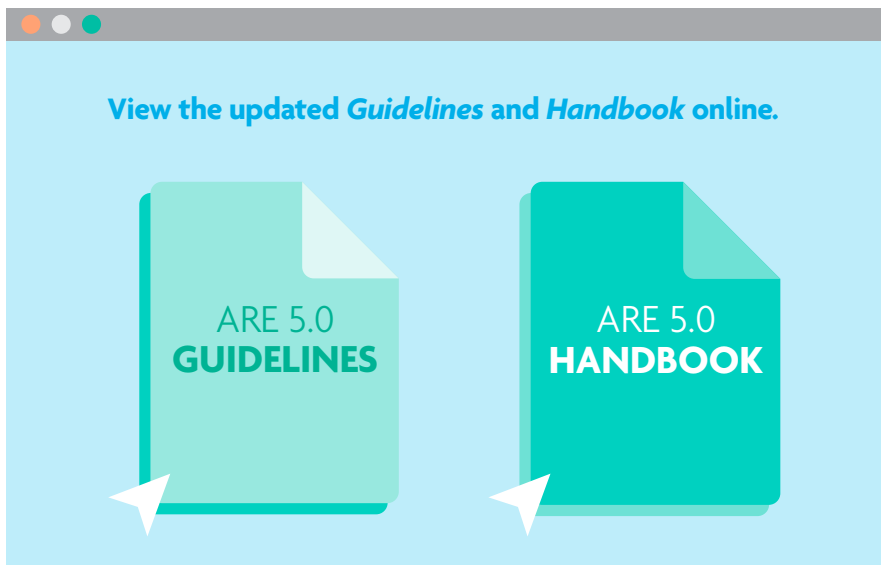
### Key things to know about the reduction of rescheduling fees:

- Rescheduling fees apply to both online and in-person appointments.

## ► Updated *Guidelines and Handbook* Available Now

NCARB's updated *ARE 5.0 Guidelines* and *ARE 5.0 Handbook*—which apply to all exams scheduled on or after the launch date of the online proctoring option—are available now. The previous versions of these documents will remain available until the launch date of the online proctoring option. You can find both versions on NCARB's website at [ncarb.org/onlineproctoring](https://ncarb.org/onlineproctoring).

These documents outline changes to exam policy and exam navigation, including the updates to exam timing and items.



### Key things to know:

- **The updated *ARE 5.0 Guidelines* includes the requirements for taking an online proctored exam.** These include both technical and environmental requirements from both NCARB and Prometric. Candidates are required to review and understand all requirements prior to scheduling an online proctored appointment.
- **The objectives outlined in the *ARE 5.0 Handbook* have not changed.** However, NCARB has added additional details about the relative percentage of the exam each objective comprises.
- **More resources available in mid-November.** The updated demo exam and exam prep videos will help candidates familiarize before the December launch.

**In addition, both the *Guidelines and Handbook* have been updated to be more accessible and mobile-friendly.**



## ► Updated Exam Candidate Conduct Policy

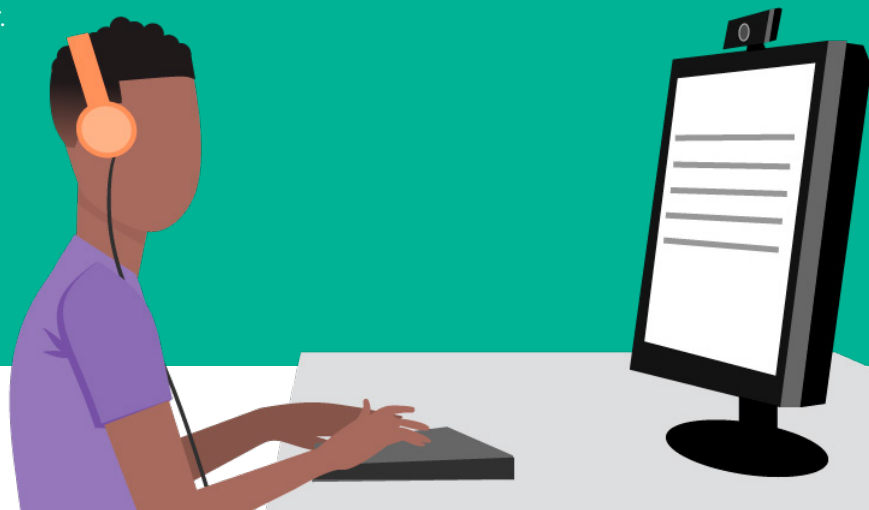
NCARB has modified the Exam Candidate Conduct policy to better reflect expectations in a dual-delivery (online proctored and in-person) world. The new policy is now in effect and available on the [NCARB website](#).

## ► Digital Whiteboard Will Replace Physical Scratch Paper

Candidates will still be able to take notes, outline potential solutions, and more using an online whiteboard option. More details regarding this tool, including the ability to become familiar with the tool via the Demonstration Exam in [My NCARB](#), will be available by mid-November at the latest.

### Key things to know:

- **Candidates must have a consistent exam experience regardless of test delivery.** In order to maintain fairness across delivery modes, NCARB needs to ensure candidates are provided the same tools while testing, whether they are testing online or onsite. To launch online proctoring appropriately, NCARB will ensure consistent delivery tools for all candidates.
- **NCARB must ensure the security of exam content.** The ARE is an essential measure of candidate competency used by all 55 U.S. licensing boards. Allowing physical scratch paper for candidates testing via online proctoring would introduce a major security risk for exam content. It is more difficult to monitor the use and disposal of loose paper when candidates are testing from a remote location, as opposed to in a test center. Because of this, online proctoring cannot launch with the allowance of physical scratch paper.
- **A “clean desk” policy is recommended by testing experts.** The replacement of scratch paper follows best practices in testing recommended to NCARB by our psychometrician experts. Requiring a “clean desk” is the most reliable way to ensure that candidates are not violating the ARE Candidate Agreement. The desire to make online proctoring available may have moved the timeline for this decision forward, but it is not the only reason behind the change.



## ► Other Changes While Testing

To improve the candidate testing experience, NCARB has made changes to ARE 5.0's references, PDF reader, and some multiple-choice items.

- **References:** Structural resources or formulas needed to solve a particular item will be included in the item.
- **PDF Reader:** NCARB and our test development consultant are upgrading the PDF reader used for case studies to improve the candidate experience.
- **Multiple-choice items will include three or four response options.** Some multiple-choice items will only include three response options, while others will include the current four response options. This change eliminated easily dismissed response options that served no assessment value, and will ease some of the timing burden placed on candidates.
- **Candidate privacy will be maintained.** Similar to the ARE's content, personal information, recorded sessions, and other sensitive data are stored securely on Prometric's advanced network.

## ► Not All Accommodations Will Be Available for Online Proctoring

NCARB offers testing accommodations for candidates with documented disabilities and temporary medical conditions. The process to apply for accommodations will not change with the launch of remote proctoring.

### Key things to know:

- **Not all accommodations will be available via online proctoring.** The nature of online proctoring means that not all exam accommodations can be offered for online testing, such as a reader or sign language interpreter. Candidates can reach out to NCARB staff for more information about their specific accommodation.
- **Accommodations must be approved prior to scheduling an appointment.** If you would like to request an accommodation, you must receive approval before you schedule your appointment (whether online or in-person).



## ► Exam Delivery Moving to PSI in Summer 2021

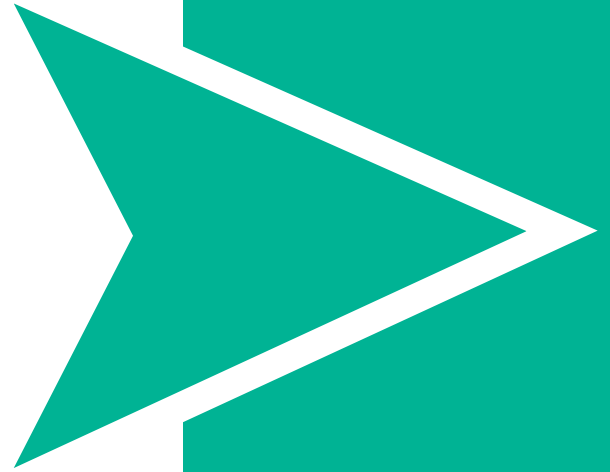
NCARB will switch to a new test administration vendor, [PSI](#), in summer 2021. PSI offers both in-person and online proctored exam appointments. More information around the migration to PSI will be available early next year.

### Key things to know:

- **NCARB will use PSI's third-party testing locations in addition to PSI's proprietary test centers.** This will significantly expand the number of physical test centers available to ARE candidates.
- **More information on how to look up your local PSI test center location will be provided in the spring 2021.**



# ONLINE PROCTORING SETUP REQUIREMENTS



Before you schedule an online-proctored appointment, please take the time to make sure your computer and testing environment meet all the requirements established by both NCARB and Prometric. These requirements help ensure that all ARE divisions are administered under comparable conditions, and that the results represent a fair and accurate measurement.

You can find the full list of requirements in the *ARE 5.0 Guidelines*, as well as the highlights below:

## ► Systems Requirements

The ARE will require a combination of Prometric's systems requirements plus some additional requirements from NCARB designed to accommodate the ARE's graphic elements. These include:

- **Operating System:** Windows/MacOS
- **Web Browser:** [Latest Google Chrome](#)
- **Webcam Resolution:** A minimum of 640 X 480 pixels
- **Microphone:** Enabled at all times
- **Screen setup:** Laptop or desktop computer in a single monitor configuration; tablets or dual-monitor configurations are NOT acceptable. Laptops are required to be plugged directly into a power source and UNATTACHED from a docking station.
- **Screen Resolution:** A minimum of 1920 x 1080 pixels
- **Monitor Size:** 19-inch or larger monitor (using a smaller monitor will reduce image clarity, and may hinder your testing progress)

- **Webcam:** External webcam with the flexibility and cord length to provide a 360-degree view of your testing environment.
- **Internet Speed:** A minimum of 3 mbps of dedicated bandwidth
- **Internet Connection Type:** An ethernet cable connection is recommended, but if you use wi-fi, be sure you have a strong signal throughout your exam administration
- **Cables:** All cables connected to the computer and/or peripheral devices must be accessible and visible for full inspection prior to testing.

**Tip:** If you wish to use a single external monitor configuration with a laptop, connect a computer monitor cable directly from your external monitor to your laptop and close the laptop screen. You will not be able to use the laptop's integrated webcam or keyboard.

## **\$50 Rebate for First Online Proctored Appointment**

To help offset the cost of meeting the system requirements for testing via online proctoring (such as the external webcam), NCARB will provide all candidates who schedule their first online appointment with a \$50 e-gift card. Every ARE candidate is eligible to receive one rebate. This gift card will be issued automatically after a candidate schedules their first online proctored appointment. Candidates who do not schedule an online proctored appointment will not be eligible.

The gift card will be delivered to the email address on file in your NCARB Record.



## ► Environmental Requirements

In addition to the technical requirements, your testing environment must meet the requirements within the [Prometric ProProctor User Guide](#). Please ensure the room you plan to test in meets all of the following conditions, and any others outlined by Prometric:

- **Indoors:** You must test indoors in a walled environment. Do not test in a room with see-through/glass walls.
- **Privacy:** You must have a private space, preferably with a single closing door. No people or animals can be present in the room while you test. If your testing room does not have a door, you can block the entrance with a bed sheet.
- **Lighting:** Your testing environment must be well-lit.
- **Quiet:** Your room must be free of background noise.
- **Workspace:** Your computer must be placed on a table or desk. You cannot test with your computer in your lap.
- **Free from distractions:** The room must be as uncluttered as possible. Your workspace and the surrounding area must be free of:
  - Cell phones or other electronic devices
  - Calculators
  - Paper or notepads
  - Books or study resources
  - Purses
  - Food or drinks
  - Tobacco or other smoking products

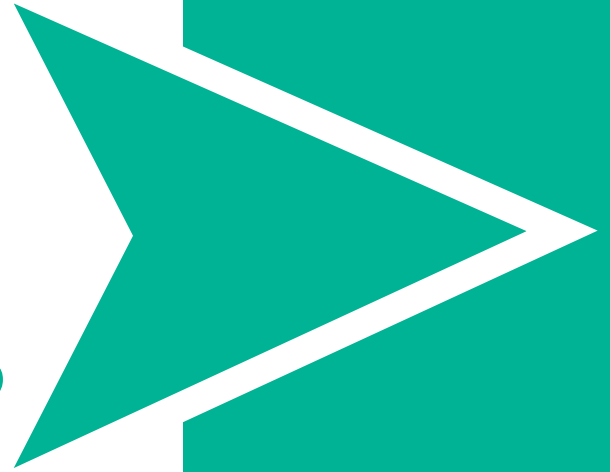
View the **Prometric ProProctor User Guide** online.



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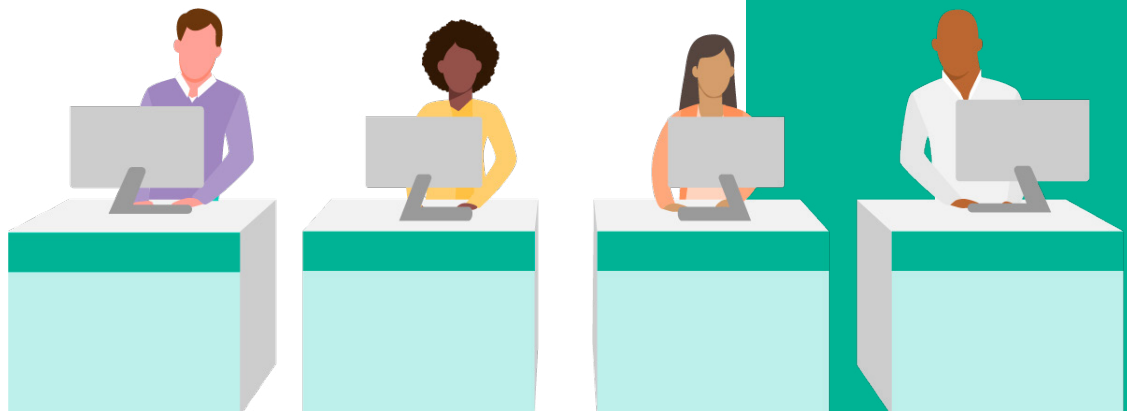
# HOW NCARB DEVELOPS EXAM CHANGES



The ARE is an essential part of the licensure process, and enables licensing boards to carry out their work to protect the public by providing a reliable assessment of candidate competency. Because of this, NCARB takes the ARE very seriously, and no changes are made to the exam's navigation, content, or delivery without serious consideration.

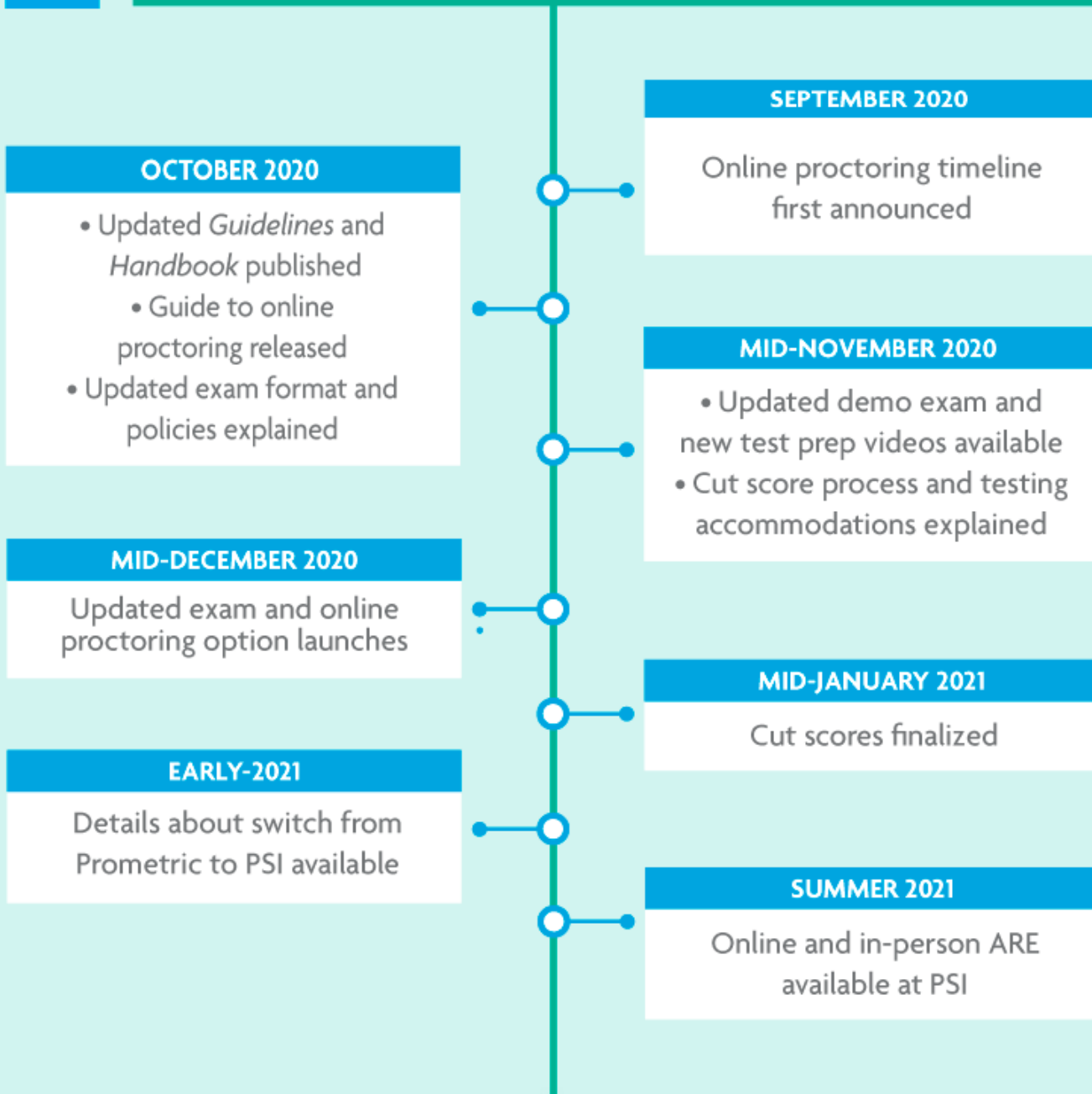
The ARE is developed by hundreds of volunteer architects, who collaborate with NCARB's examination team (including staff architects) and psychometrician experts to ensure the ARE is reliable, rigorous, and fair. NCARB uses the psychometric services of Alpine Testing Solutions, who provide expertise regarding examination best practices. Any software needed for the exam delivery is developed in partnership with Zoomorphix Systems.

When NCARB makes changes to the exam, any updates are reviewed at the staff, psychometrician, volunteer, and Board of Director level before being announced to candidates. With the help of our psychometrician experts, NCARB monitors exam performance to ensure any changes aren't unfairly impacting candidates.





## ARE ONLINE PROCTORING TIMELINE





# FAQS

## **Why is NCARB launching online proctoring?**

NCARB has been exploring the option to enable online proctoring for some time. The pandemic has highlighted the need for test delivery flexibility. With a possible spike in COVID-19 cases expected this fall and winter, candidates could experience more test center closures, further impacting their licensure progress. Because of this, NCARB is working to launch online proctoring in 2020 to provide access to the ARE for candidates who are not comfortable testing onsite or have underlying health conditions that limit their ability to test during the ongoing health crisis.

## **What do I do if there's a technical issue during my online-proctored exam?**

If you need assistance at any time during your exam, you will be able to contact your online proctor through Prometric's secure testing browser. If you are disconnected from your exam during your appointment, you will be able to reboot your computer, run the system check, and re-launch your exam using the "Launch exam" button in Prometric's browser. You must go through the whole check-in process again; however, your exam will re-start from the point where it was disconnected.

## **Who does NCARB work with to determine exam changes?**

NCARB partners with several groups of people to administer and update the ARE:

- Architect volunteers, who help develop items for the ARE
- Alpine Testing Services, who provide psychometricians (testing experts) to ensure NCARB meets industry best practices
- Jurisdictional licensing boards
- Zoomorphix Systems, who develop the software (such as the digital whiteboard) to deliver the ARE
- Prometric, who manages the test centers and provides proctoring services

## **When can I test the new exam navigation?**

The updated demo exam will be available to candidates through My NCARB in mid-November.

## **Can I take the previous version of ARE 5.0?**

No. Once the updates to the exam launch, all candidates will experience the updated version of the ARE.

## **Will the content/length of online-proctored exams be the same as the exams administered at the test center?**

Yes, candidates testing online will experience the same exam as candidates testing in person, with the same number of items, same testing length, and same exam content and objectives.