



# Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure

## **PROGRAM STANDARDS**

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# INTRODUCTION

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## What is the Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL)?

In 2015, NCARB launched the Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL), a dynamic, innovative initiative to give students the opportunity to complete the core requirements for architectural licensure while earning their degree. IPAL options within architecture programs provide students with a structured approach to making significant progress toward completion of the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) and taking each division of NCARB's practice exams for the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) before graduation. This initiative offers a systematic approach to architecture students interested in a streamlined, comprehensive path to licensure.

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## IPAL Requirements

The IPAL option is a unique and challenging opportunity. To succeed in IPAL, students must meet rigorous requirements:

1. **Significant Work Experience:** IPAL students are required to be employed in a qualifying work setting for a significant portion of their academic career, ensuring they gain the practical experience necessary for licensure. At the time of their graduation, students' reported AXP experience must equal at least 75% of the AXP's total required hours with experience documented across all six experience areas.

Note: Experience gained prior to enrolling in an academic degree program or between academic programs can be applied to the requirement.

2. **Practice Exam Proficiency:** Students must take all six divisions of the [NCARB ARE 5.0 Practice Exams](#), demonstrating their dedication to mastering the knowledge and skills required for the ARE.

IPAL allows students to connect educational theory to real-world practice and enables them to become licensed soon after graduation. IPAL students' commitment, determination, and hard work are an investment in their professional future.

# IPAL ADVISORS

This section describes the role and expectations of an IPAL advisor and the requirements for starting an IPAL option at your school.

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## IPAL Advisor Overview

The IPAL advisor is an appointed staff or faculty member who is responsible for managing your school's IPAL option and providing NCARB with necessary information on its status. The IPAL advisor is responsible for ensuring motivated students have the comprehensive support needed to complete the option's requirements.

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## Integrating IPAL Into Curriculum

NCARB does not require schools to develop new curriculum specifically for IPAL. Instead, NCARB encourages schools to integrate education, experience, and examination in the way that best suits their existing curriculum. To that end, advisors will help strategically integrate IPAL requirements into the curriculum in a way that supports the students according to the program structure at their institution.

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## IPAL Advisor's Responsibilities

### **ADVISING AND SUPPORTING IPAL STUDENTS FROM ENROLLMENT TO GRADUATION**

The IPAL advisor is the point of contact for prospective and participating students. Advisors must understand IPAL's requirements to recruit new students and monitor progress of current students. The IPAL advisor serves as a source of information and motivation for students as they progress through their academic journey while achieving the IPAL option requirements.

The IPAL advisor is required to check in with students to monitor and review their progress and provide support to ensure they are working toward completing the AXP and taking each division of NCARB's free practice exams.

### **SUBMITTING AN IPAL ANNUAL REPORT**

The IPAL advisor is required to complete an annual report that informs NCARB of the current status of the option, including student/firm participation, successes/challenges, and collaboration opportunities. [Access the IPAL annual report template.](#)

### **UPDATING THE ONLINE IPAL STUDENT ROSTER**

The IPAL Management System is an online tool created by NCARB specifically for IPAL advisors to view participating students' AXP and ARE progress. The IPAL Management System is linked to your students' NCARB Records, allowing you to monitor IPAL progress in real-time.

The IPAL advisor is responsible for adding newly enrolled students and removing students who have graduated or left the IPAL option. You must update the IPAL student roster through the management system each term. NCARB relies on you to provide up-to-date information so we can maintain current and accurate records.

### **UPDATING NCARB ON ANY PROGRAM CHANGES**

The IPAL advisor is responsible for keeping NCARB updated when/if there are any program changes, including curriculum changes and/or option offerings.

### **INFORMING NCARB OF UPCOMING IPAL GRADUATES**

In addition to updating the online IPAL student roster, IPAL advisors are responsible for notifying NCARB when a student has completed all AXP and practice exam requirements prior to graduating.

In order to help celebrate the accomplishments of graduates who fulfill all the requirements of the IPAL option, NCARB is happy to provide an official IPAL certificate and IPAL graduation cord. A three-week lead time is required for these requests. IPAL advisors should make sure to send their graduating students' names to [ipal@ncarb.org](mailto:ipal@ncarb.org) well in advance of their graduation ceremonies.

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## Creating and Implementing an IPAL Option

### PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS TO START AN IPAL OPTION

To be accepted into the IPAL initiative, your program must:

- Be an academic architecture program, in one of the following capacities:
  - ◊ Two-year community college program that has an agreement in place for articulation into a NAAB-accredited program.
  - ◊ Four-year undergraduate program that qualifies for admission into a NAAB-accredited master's program.
  - ◊ NAAB-accredited program (B.Arch., M.Arch., D.Arch.).
- Demonstrate that students have the opportunity to make significant progress (see Requirements section above) toward completion of the AXP prior to graduation.
- Provide an opportunity for students to take each division of NCARB's free practice exams prior to graduation.
- Appoint an IPAL advisor.

### FEES

There are no fees associated with review of a proposed IPAL option or the operation of an IPAL option.

### HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR IPAL PROPOSAL

Applying to offer an IPAL option is a collaborative process.

To begin, email [ipal@ncarb.org](mailto:ipal@ncarb.org) to express your program's interest. We will provide you with a short list of prompts to guide you in submitting an official Letter of Intent (LOI). NCARB will review your LOI and follow up to discuss your initial concept, provide feedback, and answer any questions. This structured approach ensures a supportive and efficient path toward acceptance into the program.

Eligible programs that choose to continue the application process will then complete a detailed application that will include a comprehensive plan for your program's structure, curriculum integration, and student support. [Download the IPAL Proposal Form to learn more.](#)

We look forward to collaborating with you to explore this transformative educational model.

## WORKING WITH NCARB AND YOUR LICENSING BOARD

While not required, many IPAL students choose to begin taking divisions of the ARE prior to graduation. As an IPAL advisor, you should check with your licensing board to determine whether your jurisdiction accepts exams taken through IPAL. Some IPAL students may not be able to obtain licensure in the jurisdiction where they are attending school if divisions taken through IPAL prior to graduation are not accepted. While each individual board is responsible for enacting changes to their licensure rules and requirements, the influence of your institution and grassroots support from practitioners in your jurisdiction will be key in effecting change.

NCARB is fully committed to partnering with institutions to provide necessary resources to assist licensing boards in their efforts to enact these changes. NCARB provides IPAL option information and data as needed to promote and advocate for the acceptance of IPAL.

Check your jurisdiction's [licensing requirements](#) to determine whether they accept candidates who took portions of or completed the ARE prior to graduation through IPAL; over half of the 55 licensing boards do.

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## Soliciting Firm Partnerships

The IPAL advisor should work to establish and maintain relationships with firms and AIA chapters. These partnerships are critical to ensuring AXP opportunities are available for IPAL students. IPAL students are committed, career-driven emerging professionals who have chosen a rigorous path that will allow them to be well on their way to licensure as an architect upon, or soon after, graduation. Firms looking for highly qualified, committed employees, should consider hiring a student enrolled in an IPAL option.

One method for maintaining ongoing relationships is to form a consortium of firms who agree to consistently employ IPAL students. As part of the consortium structure, the IPAL advisor can hold regularly scheduled meetings with the firms so they may select which IPAL students will be employed at their firm, and so the advisor can check on participants' AXP progress. The IPAL advisor can seek out other institutional collaborators, such as career services, to leverage their resources and support in identifying firm partnerships and AXP opportunities.

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## Maintaining a Successful IPAL Option

### **SOLICITING STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN AN IPAL OPTION**

Soliciting enrollment of students in an IPAL option requires a strategic approach to effectively communicate the benefits of the option and attract interested candidates. Suggested strategies include:

- Hosting information sessions that highlight option benefits.
- Targeted outreach to identify prospective students who may be able to meet the demands of the option.
- Helping students understand how their career goals and aspirations might align with the IPAL option.
- Demonstrating industry demand by showcasing job market trends and industry projections to underscore the importance of participating in an IPAL option for career advancement and long-term success.

### **MEETING FREQUENCY FOR IPAL ADVISOR AND STUDENTS**

The IPAL option is a rigorous opportunity for students whose goals include gaining licensure soon after graduation. The IPAL advisor is in a unique position to support these high-performing students in reaching their academic and professional goals. IPAL advisors should maintain regular contact with IPAL students by sharing important related information and meeting with them at least once per semester/quarter to discuss progress, identify obstacles and opportunities, and provide context around the next semester's coursework and IPAL-related milestones.

### **EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN IPAL**

Maintaining participation in an IPAL option requires a significant commitment from students, due to its accelerated nature and integration of academic coursework with professional practice requirements.

Students are expected to maintain consistent progress in completing IPAL requirements according to the structure set up by their academic program. Read the remainder of this document to better understand the roles of the student and their employer as part of the IPAL program.



**MEASURING SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL'S IPAL OPTION**

The success of the IPAL option at your institution will lie largely in the recruitment and acceptance of students with the propensity to complete the requirements of working toward completion of the AXP and attempting each division of the NCARB practice exams prior to graduation. Active and measurable participation is required by students to ensure progress. IPAL advisors should have honest conversations regarding a student's progress in line with option goals.

# IPAL STUDENTS

This section provides detailed information for students considering or enrolled in an IPAL program.

As a student participating in an [Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure](#) (IPAL) option, you're on track to jumpstart your career by completing the core licensure requirements while earning your degree. To ensure you're set up for success, here are step-by-step instructions on how to get started, plus helpful tips and resources.

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## Your Success Team: Dedicated Support Every Step of the Way

High-performance students like you are the heart of IPAL. You're driven, ambitious, and eager to excel. But you're not alone. IPAL provides you with a dedicated team of experts—your IPAL advisor and firm supervisors—who are invested in your success. They'll offer guidance, mentorship, and support to help you navigate challenges, celebrate milestones, and achieve your full potential.

### **YOUR IPAL ADVISOR**

Your IPAL advisor is your dedicated guide and mentor throughout the IPAL journey. They'll help you navigate the complexities of the program, providing personalized support and expert advice at every turn. Whether you need assistance understanding program requirements, connecting with firms, tracking licensure milestones, or making informed decisions about your next steps, your advisor will be there to offer clarity and guidance.

### **YOUR FIRM SUPERVISOR(S)**

Your firm supervisors are your mentors in the field. They'll challenge you, guide you, and provide hands-on experience that reinforces your academic learning. They'll help you develop the skills and knowledge you need to gain competency in each of the six AXP experience areas, preparing you for a fulfilling career in architecture.

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## Getting Started

Once you have been accepted into your school's IPAL option, you'll need to complete the following steps to set up and link your NCARB account.

### ACCESS YOUR “WELCOME TO IPAL” EMAIL

After your IPAL advisor enrolls you in the option, you should receive an email from NCARB welcoming you to the IPAL program. Please note, this message is sent to the email address provided by your school's IPAL advisor. If you do not receive this message, confirm your email address with your IPAL advisor so they can update it within NCARB's system. If you already have an NCARB account or Record, be sure to double-check that your advisor is using the email associated with that account.

### CREATE YOUR NCARB RECORD

Once you receive the welcome email, you'll be able to start tracking your program and licensure progress. To get started, you'll need to establish an [NCARB Record](#)—a verified account of your education, experience, and exam history. If you already have an NCARB Record, skip to “Grant Access to Your IPAL Advisor.”

To create your NCARB Record, you will also need a free [My NCARB account](#). Follow these steps to set up both, or skip to step 4 if you already have a My NCARB account.

1. Navigate to [my.ncarb.org](https://my.ncarb.org).
2. Click “Establish Record.”
3. Fill in the required fields to create an account and click “Submit.”
4. On your My NCARB homepage, click “Add” next to the NCARB Record option.
5. Fill in the required information. This step may take a while, so feel free to save and return later if you need more time.
6. After completing the information, submit payment for your NCARB Record.

### GRANT ACCESS TO YOUR IPAL ADVISOR

Once you've established an NCARB Record, you'll need to grant your IPAL advisor access to view your experience and exam progress. You can complete this step through the “My Account” section in your NCARB Record:

1. Navigate to the “Settings” page in your NCARB Record.
2. Select the “IPAL” tab and carefully review the IPAL Initiative Waiver.
3. Check the box to accept the terms and submit the waiver.

IPAL

### IPAL Initiative Waiver

☐ I affirm that I am enrolled and actively participating in an Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) option. I grant the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) permission to share information contained in my NCARB Record on experience reported for the Architectural Experience Program™ (AXP™) and the status of examinations for the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) to my school through my program's designated IPAL faculty advisor/NCARB liaison.

I understand that these reports will be used to inform my IPAL faculty advisor of my progress in the AXP and ARE, and be used to develop program reports required by NCARB. Further, I understand these reports may be used by the IPAL faculty advisor in review of my participation in the academic program.

Submit

Note: If you do not have the “IPAL” tab in your profile, you may not be listed as an IPAL student, or your IPAL status may be linked to a different email address/account in NCARB’s system. If this is the case, please ask your advisor to contact [ipal@ncarb.org](mailto:ipal@ncarb.org) for help.

## Building Your Competence: The Architectural Experience Program

### AXP GUIDELINES

Unlock the full potential of your architectural experience by becoming familiar with the [AXP Guidelines](#). This comprehensive resource is your roadmap to completing the AXP, providing detailed insights into each experience area and the diverse settings where you can gain competencies. By reviewing the *AXP Guidelines* with your supervisor, you’ll create a shared understanding of the program’s requirements and chart a clear path toward licensure, including:

- Gaining a deeper understanding of the six core practice areas, each encompassing essential competencies that showcase your growing expertise.
- Discovering the wide range of work experiences that can earn you AXP credit, including unique opportunities beyond employment by an architect.
- Understanding how to track and report your experience effectively.

## DEVELOPING COMPETENCE: AXP EXPERIENCE AREAS

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 document work experience and competency development in each area.

- **Practice Management**

In this area, 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.

- **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.

- **Programming & Analysis**

This 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.

- **Project Planning & Design**

This experience area covers the schematic design phase of a project. You'll learn to layout the building design, review building codes and regulations, coordinate schematics with consultants, and communicate design concepts with your client.

- **Project Development & Documentation**

Here, 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.

- **Construction & Evaluation**

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

## AXP REPORTING REQUIREMENT

To log your experience, you'll submit [hourly reports](#) via your NCARB Record. To earn full credit toward the AXP's requirements, you'll need to report experience within eight months of earning it. Timely reporting ensures that you and your supervisor are both familiar with the details of your work as documented in your report. You can report experience that is older than eight months—but not older than five years—for half credit. Experience that is older than five years is not eligible for hourly reporting. Not sure how the reporting requirement works? [Review examples of the reporting requirement.](#)

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## Working in a Firm

### PAID WORK EXPERIENCE

As an IPAL student, you will need to be consistently employed and participating in the AXP throughout your college career. Keep in mind that you **must** be paid for your work. Unpaid internships are not eligible for AXP credit; however, there are unpaid volunteer experiences that are eligible for credit under experience [setting O](#).

### WORKING WITH YOUR AXP SUPERVISOR

At most firms, you will be assigned an AXP supervisor based on who is responsible for your work. You may have multiple AXP supervisors while documenting the AXP. Your supervisor should help you create a strategy to gain the experience needed to complete the AXP. By collaborating with your AXP supervisor, you can bring your academic work to life. Plus, applying the theories and principles you're studying to your real-world experience can help you prepare to take the ARE practice exams.

Check in regularly with your supervisor to stay on track and maximize your learning potential. To help guide your check-ins, use our free [Licensure Progress Worksheet](#) as a resource.

### REAL-WORLD PROJECTS, REAL-WORLD SKILLS: SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS IN EACH AXP EXPERIENCE AREA

Your supervisor should assign projects that allow you to develop competency in all six of the [experience areas](#). Your supervisor should also provide insight into the expectations for the type of work relative to each area. A sampling of types of work for each area are on the following page.

**Practice Management**

- Develop procedures for responding to contractor requests (also called Requests for Information)
- Prepare proposals for services in response to client requirements
- Establish procedures to process documentation during contract administration

**Project Management**

- Determine project schedule
- Coordinate design work of in-house team members
- Assist owner in obtaining necessary permits and approvals

**Programming & Analysis**

- Analyze existing site conditions to determine impact on facility layout
- Assist owner in preparing building program, including a list of spaces and their characteristics
- Determine impact of environmental, zoning, and other regulations on site

**Project Planning & Design**

- Perform building code analysis
- Select materials, finishes, and systems based on technical properties and aesthetic requirements
- Oversee design integration of building components and systems

**Project Development & Documentation**

- Communicate design ideas to the client graphically
- Prepare submittals for regulatory approval
- Select furniture, fixtures, and equipment that meet client's design requirements and needs

**Construction & Evaluation**

- 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

Each project you undertake offers a unique opportunity to expand your skill set and gain proficiency in the AXP's core areas. Be sure to meet regularly with your supervisor to discuss how you can expand your skills across each of the experience areas. By actively seeking diverse experiences, you'll gain competencies and accelerate your path to licensure.

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## Master the ARE: Practice, Prepare, and Excel

To earn your license and become an architect, you'll need to pass all six divisions of the national licensing exam. As an IPAL student, you aren't required to take or pass the real exam prior to graduation—but you do have to take all six of the free [ARE 5.0 practice exams](#), which are available in your NCARB Record.

Taking these practice exams will give you a significant advantage in understanding the exam's format and content. Consider these practice exams your dress rehearsal for ARE success. They are designed to prepare you to pass the real exam.

### PRACTICE EXAM CONTENT

NCARB has developed six full-length divisional practice exams, one for each of the six ARE 5.0 divisions. The practice exams are assembled using the same number of items and objectives as the actual versions of each division. These are the six practice exams required for IPAL students.

NCARB also offers one multidivisional demo exam made of 75 total items across all six divisions, including two case studies. It is intended for candidates who want to become familiar with the exam's delivery and understand a cross-section of the exam's content. While you are welcome to take the multidivisional demo exam, it is not required as part of IPAL.

### UNDERSTANDING THE EXAM DIVISIONS

The six divisions of the ARE align with the six AXP experience areas. Each [ARE 5.0](#) division covers a different aspect of current architectural practice. Explore each division to learn more about the content covered:

- [Practice Management](#)

This division focuses on the management of architectural practice, including professional ethics, fiduciary responsibilities, and the regulations governing the practice of architecture.

- [Project Management](#)

Project Management focuses on the management of architectural projects, including organizing principles, contract management, and consultant management.

- [Programming & Analysis](#)

Programming & Analysis focuses on the evaluation of project requirements, constraints, and opportunities.



- [Project Planning & Design](#)

This division focuses on the preliminary design of sites and buildings.

- [Project Development & Documentation](#)

This division focuses on the integration and documentation of building systems, material selection, and material assemblies into a project.

- [Construction & Evaluation](#)

This division focuses on construction contract administration and post-occupancy evaluation of projects.

## REQUESTING AND MAINTAINING EXAM ELIGIBILITY

Before you can schedule an appointment to take a real ARE division, you'll need to receive "exam eligibility." Requesting eligibility is slightly different for IPAL students than for traditional licensure candidates, so when you're ready to take the plunge, follow these simple steps:

- Log in to your NCARB Record and select the "Exams" tab
- Click "Request Eligibility"
- Select "Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure" as your testing jurisdiction, if it is not already selected. (Do not select a state or jurisdiction other than IPAL.)

## MAINTAINING EXAM ELIGIBILITY

Licensure candidates who are granted eligibility to take the ARE while enrolled in an IPAL option can maintain those eligibilities until such time that they establish an application with one of NCARB's member jurisdictions.

## HOW TO ACCESS NCARB'S PRACTICE EXAMS

IPAL students can access the ARE 5.0 Practice Exams through the Practice Exam Dashboard. For access to the dashboard, you should log into your [NCARB Record](#), click the "Exams" tab, and navigate to the "Additional Resources" section of the page.

## HOW TO USE NCARB'S PRACTICE EXAMS

You can take the ARE 5.0 practice exams in two different modes:

- If you wish to test your grasp of ARE divisional content while replicating many of the conditions of an actual exam appointment, you can take the practice exam in **test mode**. In this mode, you will see which questions you answered correctly once you have completed the practice exam.

- If you want to linger over the exam tools and navigation and be provided with correct responses after each question, you can take each practice exam in **practice mode**.

Both modes provide your results at the end of the exam, where you can find a record of the items answered correctly or incorrectly, a percentage breakdown of how you fared in each section, and a list of the correct responses and rationales for every item on the exam.

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## Taking the Exam

While you're not required to take the ARE prior to graduation, you have the option to do so if you choose. NCARB recommends testing once you feel comfortable with the content on the exam—and our data shows that pass rates are highest immediately after completing the related AXP experience area.

### **YOUR ARE ROADMAP: THE ARE GUIDELINES**

Get familiar with the ARE by diving into the [ARE Guidelines](#). This comprehensive resource will give you the inside scoop on studying for the exam. It also covers all the essential policies and procedures you need to know before a real exam appointment, including details on scheduling a division, security requirements, receiving your score, and more.

### **NCARB'S ADDITIONAL FREE STUDY RESOURCES**

In addition to the practice exams, NCARB offers candidates an array of free [study resources](#). You can participate in the ARE online community, watch the test prep video series, subscribe to ARE Updates for important reminders, and reference the NCARB Blog for helpful study tips.

By taking advantage of NCARB's comprehensive prep materials, you'll gain the edge you need to conquer the ARE.

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## Your IPAL Toolkit: Resources for Success

### **NCARB'S IPAL OPTION PAGE**

To easily reference all things IPAL, be sure to browse our [IPAL page](#). Here you will find links to the full list of current IPAL options, benefits of enrolling in an IPAL option, FAQs, and more!

**NCARB'S LICENSING REQUIREMENTS TOOL**

If you choose to take divisions of the ARE while enrolled in IPAL, please note that not all jurisdictions accept ARE divisions taken through IPAL options. Check your jurisdiction's [licensing requirements](#) to ensure they accept candidates who took or completed the ARE prior to graduation through IPAL.

**NCARB'S STUDENT RESOURCES PAGE**

Bookmark our [student resources page](#) for quick access to NCARB's guidelines and tips. Here you will find links to education resources, AXP resources, and ARE resources.

# IPAL FIRMS

This section describes the role of firms and the individuals who supervise licensure candidates in the work place.

Your firm is vital to the success of IPAL. In order to gain experience and learn how to practice architecture in the real world, students must be able to complement their education with work opportunities. By partnering with a school that offers an IPAL-accepted option—and enabling students to obtain paid, professional experience—your firm is proactively supporting the future of architecture. In return for providing a tailored experience that enables students to fulfill the experience requirements of the AXP, your firm will benefit from the enthusiasm and talents of the next generation of architects.

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## What Sets IPAL Students Apart?

- **Driven and Dedicated:** IPAL students are a select group of motivated individuals who have chosen a rigorous path to accelerate their licensure journey. They are eager to learn, grow, and make a meaningful impact in the field of architecture.
- **Real-World Ready:** Through consistent work experience and completion of NCARB's practice exams, IPAL students gain practical skills and knowledge that make them valuable assets to your team.
- **On the Fast Track to Licensure:** By the time they graduate, IPAL students have already made significant progress toward licensure, meaning they can contribute to your firm's success at a higher level.

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## Your Firm's Role in Shaping the Future

IPAL allows students to connect educational theory to real-world practice and enables them to become licensed soon after graduation. By partnering with an academic program that offers an IPAL option, your firm plays a crucial role in shaping the next generation of architectural leaders.

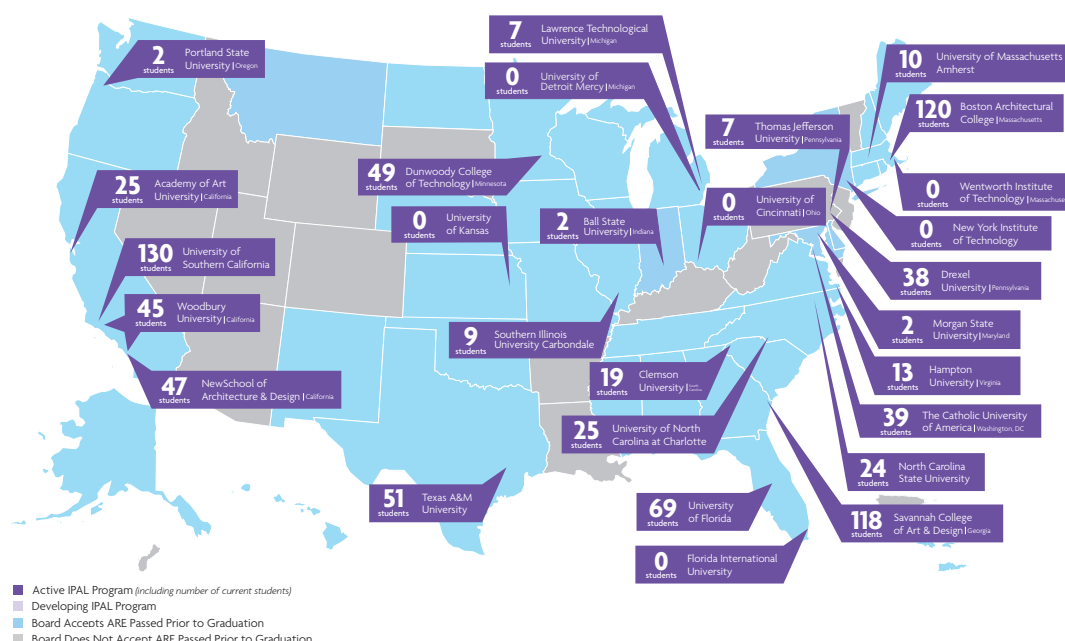
You'll provide valuable mentorship, real-world experience, and a supportive environment that helps IPAL students thrive. In return, you'll gain access to a pool of highly motivated and skilled candidates who are poised to make a significant contribution to your firm's success.

## A Nationwide Network of Top Talent: The IPAL Advantage

IPAL students are committed, career-driven emerging professionals who have chosen a rigorous path that will allow them to be well on their way to licensure as an architect upon, or soon after, graduation. Unlike other architecture students or licensure candidates, IPAL students are required to work toward completion of the AXP and take NCARB's free practice exams while enrolled in school. These intensive experiences and academic rigor help to prepare students and reduce the time it takes to enter professional practice.

If you are looking for highly qualified, committed employees, consider hiring a student enrolled in an IPAL option. Firms that are part of an IPAL option's consortium of partner firms often have the opportunity to identify and hire the school's top talent early in their careers, building their competent workforce. In addition, by hiring an IPAL student, firms can help nurture and mentor future architects and build creative synergy and collaboration between practice and the academy.

With 33 [programs](#) at 28 schools across the country, IPAL is not just an initiative—it's a nationwide movement transforming the path to licensure. By hiring an IPAL student, your firm gains access to a vast network of top-tier talent, ready to bring their knowledge and passion to your projects. Explore the map of schools with IPAL options and connect with an IPAL advisor to gain access to the talented students who are ready to make their mark on the architecture profession. Your next great hire could be just a click away!



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## IPAL Firm Expectations

Partnering with an IPAL program is not just about hiring talented students; it's about fostering the next generation of leaders. As an IPAL firm, you have a unique opportunity to shape the future of the profession by providing valuable experience and mentorship early on in students' careers.

Your firm can contribute to the success of IPAL students in the following ways:

### **PROVIDE PAID, MEANINGFUL WORK EXPERIENCE**

Licensure candidates gaining experience to meet the requirements of AXP must be paid for their work. By involving IPAL students in diverse and challenging projects, you'll help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to gain competence and thrive in the profession.

### **IDENTIFY AND ASSIGN A DEDICATED AXP SUPERVISOR**

Assigning an AXP supervisor involves selecting an architect within the firm who will mentor and oversee the progress of AXP candidates as they work toward fulfilling their experience requirements. Look for architects within your firm who have the experience, expertise, and availability to offer guidance, support, and feedback to help students grow and develop professionally. Consider individuals who are respected within the firm and have a track record of successful project management and mentorship.

AXP supervisor requirements are the same whether you are advising a student enrolled in IPAL or a licensure candidate who is not enrolled in school. The AXP supervisor oversees the licensure candidates on a regular basis and has professional knowledge of and responsibility for the licensure candidates' work. AXP supervisors are usually registered architects; however, in certain experience opportunities, supervisors may be professionals from another discipline.

[Certain experience opportunities](#) allow you to help a candidate gain AXP experience outside of the traditional supervisor/employee relationship, including site visits and design competitions.

In addition to supervising these experience opportunities, supervisors should serve as mentors to offer instruction, encouragement, and advice to candidates as they navigate the path to licensure.

### **ACTIVELY STRIVE TO PROVIDE EXPERIENCE IN THE NEEDED PRACTICE AREAS**

Your obligation as an employer is to assign projects that create opportunities for candidates to develop the competencies identified in the AXP and work toward providing experience

across the program's six experience areas. AXP supervisors will also be responsible for [reviewing their candidates' experience reports](#) and providing feedback to help guide their professional development. Our [supervisor tools and resources](#) are available to help supervisors guide their licensure candidates.

### **FOSTER A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Create an environment where IPAL students feel valued and supported. Encourage open communication, provide opportunities for professional development, and connect students with experienced architects who can serve as mentors and role models.

### **MAINTAIN REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL'S IPAL ADVISOR**

While IPAL options vary by school, they each have an appointed IPAL advisor who is responsible for maintaining the initiative at their school. It is up to the individual academic programs to determine how to best interweave experience and examination into their existing curricula to satisfy IPAL requirements. In addition, some schools offer students assistance in finding employment that qualifies for the AXP.

No matter the format, building a strong relationship with the IPAL advisor offers the opportunity for important open dialogue between the academy and practitioners and ensures students obtain work experience that aligns with the experience areas needed to complete the AXP.

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## **Providing Varied Experiences**

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Exposure to different types of work challenges individuals to adapt and become more versatile in their abilities and can be highly beneficial for your IPAL students' personal and professional growth. Interacting with different managers exposes students to diverse leadership styles, communication methods, and decision-making approaches.

In addition, working with various managers can expand your IPAL students' professional network. You can further emphasize the importance of networking opportunities by encouraging IPAL students to join professional organizations and participate in firm networking events.

## COMMON WORK ASSIGNMENTS WHILE GAINING EXPERIENCE

### Examples of Experience That Can Be Gained at a First-Year Level

#### Practice Management

- Adhere to ethical standards and codes of professional conduct
- Participate in community activities that may provide opportunities or design of facilities that reflect community need
- Understand implications of policies and procedures

#### Project Management

- Define roles and responsibilities of team members
- Collect the necessary documents and data as directed to support the work of consultants

#### Programming & Analysis

- Record field measurements using basic tools (e.g., tape measure, electronic levels, hardware/software)
- Prepare diagrams illustrating spatial relationships and functional adjacencies
- Assist owner in preparing list of spaces and their characteristics
- Gather information about community concerns and issues that may impact proposed project

#### Project Planning & Design

- Research products and materials as directed for consideration on projects
- Conduct preliminary code and zoning research based on the project program and jurisdiction (e.g., project occupancy, size, and construction)
- Develop sustainability goals based on existing environmental conditions

#### Project Development & Documentation

- Execute changes to drawings based on redline comments
- Establish knowledge of meaning and purpose of drawing elements (lines, hatch patterns, tags, dimensions, etc.)



## Examples of Experience That Can Be Gained at a Second-Year Level

### Practice Management

- Prepare marketing documents that accurately communicate firm's experience and capabilities

### Project Management

- Observe/participate in pre-construction, pre-installation, and regular progress meetings with design team
- Accurately record relevant and key information during meetings in a clear and useful format

### Programming & Analysis

- Establish project design goals
- Analyze existing site conditions to determine impact on facility layout
- Assist owner in preparing building program including list of spaces and their characteristics

### Project Planning & Design

- Prepare code analysis documentation
- Understand implications of evolving sustainable design strategies and technologies
- Define requirements for site survey based on established project scope

### Project Development & Documentation

- Follow instructions to assemble construction drawings, as directed

## Examples of Experience That Can Be Gained at a Third-Year Level

### Practice Management

- Maintain positive work environment within firm that facilitates cooperation and teamwork
- Prepare proposals for services in response to client requirements
- Develop procedures for responding to contractor requests

### Project Management

- Understand implications of project delivery methods
- Collaborate with stakeholders during design process

### Programming & Analysis

- Gather information about client's vision, goals, budget, and schedule to validate project scope and program
- Evaluate opportunities and constraints of alternative sites
- Determine impact of environmental, zoning, and other regulations on site

### Project Planning & Design

- Review local, state, and federal codes for changes that may impact design and construction
- Research and document site development restrictions
- Prepare design alternatives

### Project Development & Documentation

- Use CAD and/or BIM software to create 2-D and 3-D drawings as directed
- Communicate design ideas to client with two-dimensional (2-D) computer aided design software

## Examples of Experience That Can Be Gained at a Fourth-Year Level

### Practice Management

- Use graphic design software to prepare presentation materials as directed
- Develop procedures for responding to changes in project scope
- Participate in professional development activities that offer exchanges with other design professionals
- Understand implications of project delivery technologies

### Project Management

- Manage information exchange during construction
- Prepare written communications related to design ideas, project documentation, and contracts

### Programming & Analysis

- Assess environmental impact to formulate design decisions
- Determine impact of existing transportation infrastructure on site

### **Project Planning & Design**

- Select materials, finishes, and systems based on technical properties and aesthetic requirements
- Determine design parameters for building engineering systems

### **Project Development & Documentation**

- Communicate design ideas to the client graphically
- Prepare submittals for regulatory approval
- Select furniture, fixtures, and equipment that meet client's design requirements and needs

### **Construction & Evaluation**

- Review shop drawings and submittals during construction for conformance with design intent
- Respond to Contractor Requests for Information

## **Examples of Experience That Can Be Gained at a Fifth-Year Level**

### **Practice Management**

- Develop and maintain effective and productive relationships with clients
- Understand implications of policies and procedures to ensure supervision of design work by architect in responsible control
- Establish procedures to process documentation during contract administration

### **Project Management**

- Manage modifications to the construction contract
- Identify changes in project scope that require additional services
- Determine project schedule

### **Programming & Analysis**

- Evaluate results of feasibility studies to determine project's financial viability
- Develop conceptual budget

### **Project Planning & Design**

- Oversee design integration of building components and systems
- Present design ideas
- Evaluate results of feasibility studies to determine project's technical viability

## Project Development & Documentation

- Sketch common design and construction drawings (e.g., perspectives, plans, sections, details, elevations) to explain concepts
- Communicate design ideas to client with three-dimensional (3-D) computer-aided design software
- Update Cost of Work estimates
- Understand the role of specifications in construction documents

## Construction & Evaluation

- 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
- Identify discrepancies when comparing construction documents against existing field conditions
- Manage project close-out procedures and documentation

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## Maximize IPAL Success: Strategies for Supporting Future Architects

Ensuring a successful IPAL experience for your students involves collaboration, communication, and a commitment to fostering their professional development. Here are some additional strategies your firm can implement to maximize the benefits of partnering with an IPAL program:

### ESTABLISH CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Start your partnership on the right foot by establishing clear expectations with your IPAL students. Use NCARB's [AXP Candidate and Supervisor Expectations](#) guide to facilitate open conversations about roles, responsibilities, and goals.

### TRACK PROGRESS WITH THE LICENSURE PROGRESS WORKSHEET

Utilize NCARB's [Licensure Progress Worksheet](#) to track your IPAL students' progress toward licensure. This tool helps you identify areas where they excel and areas where they may need additional support.

## STAY INFORMED WITH THE AXP SUPERVISOR UPDATE

Subscribe to the [AXP Supervisor Update](#) for regular tips, resources, and best practices for effectively supervising and mentoring IPAL students.

## FOSTER MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Connect your IPAL students with experienced architects within your firm who can serve as mentors and role models. Encourage regular check-ins and open communication to foster a supportive learning environment and help them stay on track with AXP.

## EXPLORE CONSORTIUM PARTNERSHIPS

Consider collaborating with other firms to develop a consortium that provides IPAL students with a wider range of experiences and opportunities to support their growth. This can also keep students employed and, in turn, help your firm access a broader pool of talented candidates.

## SUPPORT LICENSURE PROGRESS

While not required for IPAL, students enrolled in IPAL may begin taking divisions of the ARE prior to graduation. There are many ways firms can support IPAL students as they prepare for and take the ARE, including:

- Providing access to test prep resources, such as study materials and study groups
- Providing study leave and/or flexible work schedules
- Providing financial support, such as covering or reimbursing exam fees for passed exams, offering a spot bonus once all exams are passed, and covering professional membership dues
- Celebrating milestones as students progress through the IPAL option

## BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE TOGETHER

Remember that with your investment in the development of IPAL students, your firm is not only gaining valuable team members but also contributing to the future of the architecture profession. Through your support and guidance, you can empower the next generation of architects to achieve their full potential.