

The NCARB logo consists of a white horizontal bar above the letters "NCARB" in a white, sans-serif font, all set against a blue background.

NCARB

A large green triangle is centered within a white triangle, which is itself centered within a larger blue triangle. The text is positioned inside the green triangle.

Your Guide to
ARE[®] 5.0

ncarb.org/ARE5



Your Guide to ARE® 5.0

Use our tips and resources to create your personal plan for exam success.

The Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) is a multi-division exam used to assess your knowledge and skills regarding the practice of architecture. As the national licensing exam, the ARE is designed to focus on areas of practice that affect the public health, safety, and welfare.

As you prepare to take the ARE, you'll probably have a few questions. And we're here to help you at every step along the way—with study resources, expert help, and more.

Want to learn more about the path to earning your license? Check out our guide to becoming an architect at [destinationarchitect.org](https://www.destinationarchitect.org).

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Understanding the Basics

The exam is designed to make sure you're ready to practice independently. ARE 5.0 features six divisions organized around the progression of a typical architecture project and the management of an architecture firm. These divisions also align to the six practice areas of the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®).

The divisions can be taken in the order that suits you best, whether that means taking each division as you gain work experience in that area or taking all six in a row. Not sure where to start? Try taking our free practice exams for each division to see where you're most comfortable.

ARE 5.0 Divisions

Practice Management

65 items | 2 hr 40 min

Project Planning & Design

100 items | 4 hr 5 min

Project Management

75 items | 3 hr

Project Development & Documentation

100 items | 4 hr 5 min

Programming & Analysis

75 items | 3 hr

Construction & Evaluation

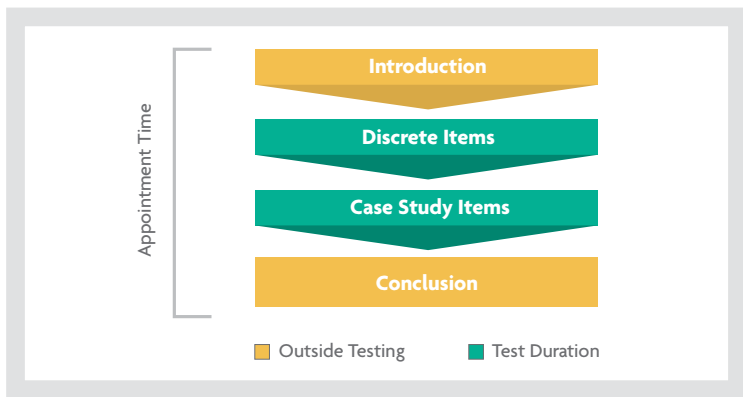
75 items | 3 hr

Division Format

All six divisions of ARE 5.0 are organized the same way, although you'll find that some divisions are longer and have more items (or questions) than others.

When you sit down to test, your appointment will begin with a couple introduction screens and conclude with a few reminders. Before you end your exam appointment, you will have the opportunity to find out how you did on the division.

In between the introduction and conclusion, you'll take the content portion of each division, which includes two sections: individual (or discrete) items and case study items. You can answer the questions in any order you want, so feel free to flag items you want to review later or jump directly to the case study section using the exam summary screen. Keep in mind, if you take a break at any point during your exam, you won't be able to revisit any items seen prior to your break—even if they are incomplete or flagged for review.



Item Types

Each division includes a combination of multiple-choice, check-all-that-apply, hotspot, and drag-and-place items—you'll find a variety of these as both individual items and case study items.

Did You Know?

All exam items are worth one point. **There is no partial credit for any item type.** You must respond correctly to each item element to receive credit.

Multiple Choice

Multiple choice items contain a question with three or four possible responses. Select the single response that correctly answers the question.

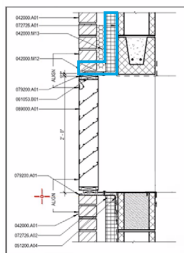
Check-All-That-Apply

Similar to multiple choice items, check-all-that-apply items contain a question followed by six possible responses. Select the two to four responses (depending on the prompt) that correctly answer the question.

Hotspot

Hotspot items contain a question followed by a graphic, like a diagram or drawing. Use your mouse to select the area or object in the image that is asked for in the question. Each hotspot item has an acceptable scoring area; if you place the center of the crosshair within the area, your response will be counted as correct.

On the wall section detail to the right, click the area where thru-wall flashing is required.



Drag-and-Place

Drag-and-place items contain a question followed by a graphic, like a diagram or drawing, as well as a bank of design elements. Select one or more of these elements and drag them to the correct location on the graphic. If necessary, elements can be rotated by right clicking.

Throughout the exam, any specific formulas you need to answer an item will be included in the item's prompt.

Case Studies

Case studies evaluate your ability to combine several pieces of information, which is how architects solve problems on a daily basis. For each case study, you'll need to use the resources provided to gain an understanding of the architectural scenario.

You'll be asked to respond to a series of items based on the scenario and resources provided. Each item in a case study is scored individually, and the items won't build on each other—so you **don't** need to answer one question correctly in order to be able to answer the next.

Case Study Strategy

Because you'll need to evaluate the provided resources, case studies can take up more testing time than individual items. As you prepare, make sure you create a plan that'll leave you with enough time, whether that means navigating to a case study at the beginning of an exam appointment or waiting until the end.

REMEMBER: You don't need to read all the case study resources. Use the search function and bookmarks inside each resource to quickly navigate to the relevant information you need to answer the question.

An illustration of a hand holding a magnifying glass. The hand is light-skinned and is holding the handle of the magnifying glass, which has a blue and white grip. The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on the text in the center of the page. The background is a solid teal color.

2 case studies
per division

5-10 items
per case study

What's a Case Study?

Each case study focuses on one architectural scenario. You'll be given a description, key information, and several supporting resources, and then asked a series of questions related to the scenario.

Study Resources

Ready to start studying? NCARB offers a number of free tools and resources on our website that you can use to prepare for the exam, including:

ARE 5.0 Guidelines

This essential resource has everything you need to prepare for the exam—including information about the objectives for each division, instructions for scheduling test center and online proctored exams, and steps to apply for exam accommodations. Plus, read key policies about candidate conduct, ID requirements, and more.

ARE 5.0 Community

You don't have to test alone—join the ARE 5.0 Community to share tips and advice with fellow candidates, talk to our exam experts, and look for study groups near you.

ARE 5.0 Test Prep Video Series

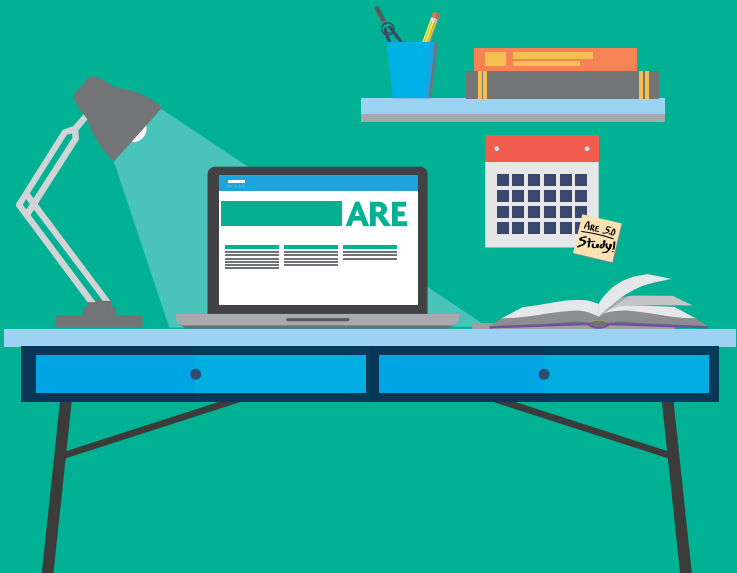
Our video prep series offers exclusive insight into each ARE 5.0 division with information on content, sample questions, and suggested references.

ARE 5.0 Demonstration Exam

If you just want to practice navigating the exam format, you can try our free demo exam at www.ncarb.org/demoexam. With a variety of practice questions and all the tools you'll see in the actual exam, the demo will help make sure you're comfortable with the interface before you test.

Free Practice Exams

Inside the “Exams” tab of your NCARB Record, you can find free, full-length practice exams for each ARE 5.0 division on your Practice Exam Dashboard. You can take the practice exams in two modes. Test mode mimics the experience you’ll have during a real exam appointment and provides a score report afterward. Practice mode provides the correct answer and rationale behind each item as you go.



Taking the Test

Eligibility

Before you can schedule an exam appointment, your jurisdiction's board of architecture will need to approve your eligibility to test. In most cases, you can request eligibility after you've met your jurisdiction's education requirement—when you're ready, go to the “Exams” tab in your NCARB Record to get started.

Scheduling

To take a division, you'll need to login to your Record, navigate to the “Exams” tab, and select the “Schedule a Division” button. From there, follow the prompts to schedule your appointment. When you schedule, you'll be able to choose whether you want to take your exam in person or online.

If you fail, you'll need to wait **60 days** before taking that division again, and you can only take each division a **maximum of three times** in any 12-month period.

Exam Cost

Each exam appointment costs \$235. You have the option of prepaying for your exam seat before scheduling your appointment, or paying when you schedule your exam.

Exam Security

We're serious about protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare, and to do that, we have to protect the content of the ARE.

The exam is currently administered using PSI's secure test centers and online proctoring system. During your appointment, you'll have to:

- Present a valid photo ID with a signature—the first and last name on your ID must **completely** match the first and last name in your NCARB Record or you will not be permitted to test
- Complete a security screening, which includes emptying your pockets and rolling up your sleeves and pant legs
- Stow any personal items (including your cell phone) in a locker or secure storage bag if you're at a physical test center, or outside your online-proctored area if you're testing remotely
- If testing online, you'll need to take short videos of your testing area to confirm that it meets the environmental requirements in the *ARE 5.0 Guidelines*.

Be sure to arrive at least 30 minutes early so you have enough time to check in—even if you're testing online. You can read the *ARE 5.0 Guidelines* for more details on what to expect during your appointment, or to learn how to request testing accommodations.

Breaks

Each division of the ARE has a set amount of optional break time, which you can use at your discretion. If you take a break, you will be unable to revisit any items that were seen prior to your break—even if they are incomplete or flagged for review. Those items will be locked for the duration of your appointment.

Score Reports

Your ARE performance is reported as pass or fail.

On passing score reports, you won't receive feedback on how you did—just that you passed (which is all that matters).

On failing score reports, you can find a scaled score, as well as detailed feedback on your performance including:

- The percentage of items you answered correctly for each content area
- The average percentage of items that were answered correctly by candidates who passed the division

You can use this information to understand exactly how you did in each content area and where you should focus your studies before retesting.

Note: A pass/fail decision on an ARE division is determined by the total number of items answered correctly across all sections and is not based on individual performance within each section.

Score Validity Policy

Under the score validity policy, a passed exam division is valid throughout the delivery of the exam version under which it was taken (e.g., ARE 4.0), as well as the next exam version (e.g., ARE 5.0).

Some jurisdictions may have a rolling clock policy that places a time limit on the validity of passed exam divisions. If you're pursuing licensure in one of those jurisdictions, you'll still be subject to its rolling clock. Learn more at www.ncarb.org/scorevalidity.



Did You Know?

At the end of your appointment, you'll have the option to view provisional feedback. This is an accurate indicator of whether you passed or failed, but keep in mind that it's not official and doesn't replace your score report.

Take a Test Run

If you're getting ready to take an online proctored exam, keep in mind that you are responsible for meeting the technical, system, and environment requirements outlined in the *ARE 5.0 Guidelines*. The easiest way to make sure you're ready for your appointment is by taking a test run!

This free, 30-minute appointment lets you go through the check-in process with PSI. You should use the same setup you plan to use during your actual exam.

Tip: Connect to the internet via ethernet, not WiFi, and make sure you have admin privileges on your computer so you can adjust the security settings as needed.



FAQs

Where can I find ARE 5.0 study materials?

You can find free study materials—including the *ARE 5.0 Guidelines*, and a series of ARE 5.0 test prep videos—by visiting www.ncarb.org/ARE5. Plus, check out the Practice Exam Dashboard in your NCARB Record for free, full-length, fully scored practice exams.

Visit the ARE 5.0 Community to get real-time help from NCARB experts, share study tips with other candidates, and access all our tools and resources. Join the community at www.ncarb.org/are5community.

When will I receive my score report?

Results for all divisions are typically processed within 7–10 days of your test date. You'll receive an email notification once your score has been processed and is available to view in your NCARB Record.

I passed the ARE. What happens next?

If you have completed both the ARE and the AXP, NCARB will check your Record to see if you have met all the requirements for initial licensure in your selected jurisdiction. Once you have, we will automatically transmit your Record to that jurisdiction for licensure. If your jurisdiction has additional requirements, you may have to complete those before becoming licensed. If you haven't completed the AXP yet, continue earning and reporting your professional experience.

Where can I find the latest information about the ARE?

Stay up-to-date on the latest ARE news by subscribing to our free newsletters, **ARE Update** and **Destination Architect**, at www.ncarb.org/subscribe.

Who develops the ARE?

Hundreds of architects from across the country volunteer their services, expertise, and time to write, test, and analyze the ARE. In addition, we bring psychometricians (professionals in the world of testing and measurement) to the table to ensure the validity, reliability, and fairness of the exam meets national testing standards.

Will I be able to test online if I'm located internationally?

Yes. PSI offers online-proctored exam times around the globe 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. If your testing environment meets the technical and environmental requirements set by NCARB and PSI, you will be able to test—regardless of your current global location.

What happened to the rolling clock?

NCARB retired the rolling clock policy, which placed a five-year expiration date on passed exam divisions, on April 30, 2023. On May 1, 2023, NCARB implemented a new score validity policy, which bases the validity of passed ARE divisions on exam versions (such as ARE 4.0 or 5.0) rather than a set time frame. If you are seeking licensure in a jurisdiction that has a rolling clock requirement, you will still be subject to your jurisdiction's rolling clock.

For more information on
the **ARE 5.0**, visit:



ncarb.org/blog



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youtube.com/ncarborg



ncarb.org/are5community



And subscribe to the ARE Update: www.ncarb.org/subscribe

Notes

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Notes

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The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, in collaboration with licensing boards, facilitates the licensure and credentialing of architects to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.



NCARB

LET'S GO FURTHER

WWW.NCARB.ORG