NCARB Live Follow-Up: General ARE Questions

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Jared Zurn [00:00]: Hello everybody. Today at NCARB, we're doing some follow-up Q&A from the last NCARB live. There were a lot of questions that came in, and we want to make sure we get all your questions answered. So Michelle and I are going to take the time to just rapid fire, and answer your questions. And I'm going to kick it off right away with some general questions about the ARE that came in. And question number one was:

Why didn't NCARB pause the rolling clock during the pandemic?
And what I would say is the rolling clock policy is one that really doesn’t allow for pausing, but what it does allow for is extensions. And so, we didn’t pause the policy, but what we did do was we granted all candidates an automatic 15-month rolling clock extension. So in essence, the policy really has been paused for 15 months starting back in March 1 of 2020.

Michelle Cohn [00:47]: All right, great. So the next question is:

What was the total extension provided from NCARB for the rolling clock, and are there any further extensions anticipated?
So Jared, you already answered that first question, 15 months total extension has been provided. And we don't have any further extensions planned at this moment, but we are continuing to keep an eye on testing conditions. And we will certainly review that in the future if another extension is needed.

Jared Zurn [01:17]: Question number three:

What is the percentage of candidates that have not been able to test in person due to the pandemic?
The reality is we don't have specific data on this, so I can't give you a really solid number. What I can tell you is that we do know that our exam volumes are lower today than they were pre-pandemic. And we do know that the individual number of candidates that are testing is also lower. So it's showing us that there is a subset of our population of candidates that is not testing right now as part of the pandemic, I just can't give you exact numbers on it.

Michelle Cohn [01:47]: Thanks, Jared. Next question:

Are there plans for licensed architects to have to recertify?
So right now, all of the jurisdictions in the U.S. require continuing education for architects to renew their licenses, but there is no plan that we know of for architects to potentially have to recertify, in other words, retake the exam, moving forward.
Where did all of the old NCARB ARE community posts go?
Answer this question two ways. One, the Google community was closed. That was our first online community, and that was shut down, Google communities went away. So that’s just completely gone, out into the ether. As far as the current ARE 5.0 Online Community, NCARB does about every month or so, we look at old posts that no longer have any relevant information, that are out of date. And then those posts are automatically deleted from the platform. So old posts just naturally also get deleted from the community.

Why hasn’t NCARB moved toward an open book testing scenario as similar professional organizations have done, for instance, the PE exam?
Great question. And in fact, it has been discussed on occasion at our Exam Committee level about potentially moving towards an open book exam. It’s just that decision, it hasn’t been made to pursue that specific direction. But I’ll just emphasize that all information that candidates would need on their exam is actually provided within the exam as a reference or within the item itself. So in some sense, the information from a book, it is there for the candidates even though they don’t have that book right there in front of them.

Why does NCARB not view a proctored exam in a testing center and an in-home exam as two different experiences?
And I would say, I think in NCARB does view those as two different experiences. I think the ability for myself to take an exam right here in my home would be a very different experience than if I had to get in the car, drive from Prometric test center, do parking, all that fun stuff, there are going to be different experiences. What NCARB is focused on are making sure that candidates have the same exam tool set and the same exam. So regardless of whether you take it at home or whether you take it in a test center, what we need to validate is that you have the same tools, or basically the same fair testing opportunity.

Is the at-home option due to the pandemic or has it always been planned?
So I mentioned the Exam Committee just a few moments ago. This is something that actually has been discussed with the Exam Committee for the last couple years that I’ve specifically been involved in. That tossing around ideas, understanding what is happening within the testing industry as a whole not just within architectural testing, but overall in the testing industry. We’ve really been just following developments in the world of online proctored test delivery with the idea that at some point NCARB was going to move there. And we want it to be up on those best practices and what would be the best direction for our organization. That
being said, the plans certainly sped up once the pandemic hit, just knowing that candidates weren't able to get to the test center. And we wanted to remove that obstacle for our candidates.

**Jared Zurn [05:20]:** And our final question for this general section is:

**What steps will NCARB take to make the ARE more equitable?**

And NCARB's actually been working on equity in the exam for quite some time. You hear us talk a lot about fairness, and you also need to understand that we are constantly evaluating exam performance across different demographics. NCARB completed a rather comprehensive analysis of the ARE about a year and a half ago where we really dug into what's something called “differential item functioning” in the testing world to ensure that items are not unintentionally biasing one population over another. And so we're going to continue to do those types of efforts. That's what we can do with an examination, is to make sure that our item writing committee is very diverse not only in years of experience, but region of the country, their own individual backgrounds. So we intentionally bring a diverse group of people together.

It's very inclusive in how all of the items are developed. It's very much pure driven as far as how the items come together and are evaluated, and then eventually decided that they make it onto the exam. And then we're going to continue to increase our training, and we did more of that this year with our item writers about equity in the exam when it comes to item development. So I think you're going to continue to hear more about this from NCARB as we continue to evolve the airy.

So at this time, we've wrapped up the first questions from the section on general ARE. We hope you found this information valuable, and check out the other videos. Thank you.