

Q&A Webinar with NCARB

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Topic: Recent updates related to IDP and ARE

Moderator: Samantha Miller, Communications

Panelists: Nick Serfass, Assistant Director, Internship + Education; Jared Zurn, Director, Examination

Samantha: Hi everyone, and welcome to NCARB Live—a new webinar series for emerging professionals. I'm Samantha Miller, and I'm here with Nick Serfass, the assistant director of Internship + Education, and Jared Zurn, the director of examination. Today we're going to be chatting about a few of our recent program updates, including the upcoming launch of ARE 5.0 and our new mobile app for IDP. Many of you submitted questions through Twitter, Facebook, and our blog, and you can continue to ask questions during the webinar using the chat tool on your screen. Let's get started.

Nick: Sounds good.

Samantha: All right, our first question: Nick, can you just tell us what's new with IDP?

Nick: Sure. There are a couple of big changes that recently happened for IDP. The first was the duration change. Previously, interns needed to work a certain duration of time in an office in order to qualify for IDP. It was at least 15 hours per week for at least eight consecutive weeks. That's now been wiped clean, so any hours count—regardless of if it's 15 minutes at a time, or 30 minutes, or 45 minutes. Whatever it is, that duration is now gone. The second big change is IDP eligibility dates. Previously, you had to actually enroll in a NAAB-accredited degree program, a pre-professional program, or start working in an architecture firm in order to begin IDP. That's now have been wiped clean as well, and as soon as you graduate from high school, you're eligible for IDP. So those are the two main programmatic changes that we've had in IDP recently.

Samantha: Great. And can you tell us a little bit about our new mobile app for IDP?

Nick: Absolutely. For those of you who haven't seen it yet, our new mobile app is called My IDP. It's in the AppStore. It allows you to go in, see where you are in the current program, and it allows you to document your hours on a continual basis. I've actually heard stories of people logging in before they go to bed each night and putting in their hours. You could also submit your report and you can actually post it for other social media outlets as well.

Samantha: Best of all it's free.

Nick: And it's free. Yes, ma'am.

Samantha: Great. Thanks, Nick. Jared, can you tell us what's new with ARE?

Jared: Sure. The biggest improvement in ARE in the last year is we rolled out the My Examination portal, which was a huge improvement for the candidate's experience. It really allows them to control and access where they're at in the exam process. It's all available through their NCARB Record. It's just been a great enhancement, and it's really allowed us to make some feature changes.

The biggest feature change in the last couple of months was we were able to change the length of time that you have to wait before you could reschedule your exam. You do have to wait six months before you can retest, but you used to have to wait multiple months before you could actually schedule that appointment. With My Examination and the new system improvements, if you do find out you have a failing score report, you are able to secure your next testing session.

Samantha: Great, thanks. So we'll jump in to our questions that were submitted by you all. Our first few questions come via Comic from Architexts. The first question is, "Why do we have to take more tests than engineers?"

Jared: That question gets thrown to me, and I think it's a great question. What I will point out is that I'm an architect. I'm licensed in Minnesota and I was practicing before coming to work here at NCARB. I get this question a lot. Actually people really want to know why is the architecture exam the way it is. And the sad reality is that I could spend the next 45 minutes talking to you about this, because this is a really big deal and it's really great, from my opinion. I will answer the question this way: the reality is, every profession—whether it's engineers, whether it's lawyers, architects, whoever—really has to decide what is that core competency that we need to assess our candidates on. The engineers actually have a slightly different system than we do. Engineers, when they come out of school, do the engineer and training exam, and they take that right away. Then they go into their internship, and after that, they take their PE or their Professional Engineering Exam. Architecture is a little bit different but what we've done is we really looked at all of the competencies of architecture, and currently it's broken down into those seven divisions. It seems like a lot, and the answer: it's a lot, right?

As we know—Nick is an architect also—architects need to know a lot of stuff. That's what we say. We are generalists. We know a lot or we know a little bit about a lot of things, and that's really what our tests are.

Nick: I think that broader subject matter that you need to know is really kind of what drives the amount exams that we have.

Jared: In contrast, what we always here is that engineers know a lot about a more specific topic.

Samantha: Great. And our other question from that comic: "Why do I have to pay a yearly fee to keep my IDP Record active?"

Nick: Sure. Another question we actually do here quite often. Just to set a baseline, right now the fee structure is \$350 upfront and that's good for three years. So there isn't a yearly fee once you've paid that initial upfront cost. However, after that, there is an annual fee beyond that. And part of the reason is we're continuing to evolve our programs and our services here at NCARB. If you're going to continue to use those programs and services beyond those initial three years, it only makes sense to contribute through fees and additional dollars that way. It helps us fund our programs and helps us fund our services. In particular, I want to go back to that My IDP app. Our software team is in-house. We designed all those programs ourselves. We don't contract out services like that. Some of the interactive tools you see on our website—especially when we went from IDP to IDP 2.0—all of that's done internally, and the evolution of the program itself. All of those programmatic changes are done internally as well. Part of those funds support those efforts.

Samantha: Great. Our next question comes from Amelia on Twitter. She wants to know, "Why do I have to enter my high school diploma information now?"

Nick: Another good question we're starting to see more and more of with the new IDP eligibility dates. Again, we go back to the rule change. Now, as soon as you graduate high school you're eligible for IDP. Previously, we actually had specific forms that needed to be filled out by third parties. It was either an IDP educator coordinator or a supervisor at your firm that had to fill out a specific form that told us when you could begin IDP. That's no longer the case. Now, you just need to tell us the month and year of your graduation from high school and you're good to go. It's actually a much easier, smoother, more streamlined process. It just seems a little tricky for those people currently in the process because we are making them go back to document their month and year again of high school, but the actual diploma, we don't require.

Samantha: Great. Our next question comes from Vince on Twitter. He says, "I don't want to get caught between ARE 4.0 and 5.0. Should I wait to take my exams?"

Jared: That's a really good question from Vince. What we need to understand is that yes, ARE 5.0 is coming and we've announced that. But we also want to reinforce that ARE 5.0 isn't going to launch until late 2016. So for Vince and his current situation—not knowing exactly where you are, Vince—but the reality is you have plenty of time to complete all of the aspects of ARE 4.0 long before 5.0 would even launch. My advice to you would be, yes. Just keep going, get going. Get 4.0 done.

Samantha: Great. This question comes from the webinar: "Why is there a reporting requirement?"

Nick: I think that's in my zone again. I think the reporting requirement—for those out there who don't know what that is—is sometimes referred to as the six-month rule, which is actually a little tricky because it's actually an 8-month rule in some respect. Essentially, what it requires that you do is when you report your hours to not go farther back than eight months from the current date. That eight months consists of a six-month block of time and a two-month grace period. That's what it is. The reason why we have it is threefold. First, the internship is set up to be a back and forth between a supervisor and an intern. It's a structured internship. By having a reporting requirement, you can ensure a more frequent interaction in a back-and-forth dialog. Second, is for the intern to know where they are at any given time in the process. In the previous iteration before the six-month rule, folks would submit all of their experience at once. Three years, five years at a time, only to have some of it, or potentially all of it, wiped clean because either they weren't working underneath an architect, they didn't know they were missing a particular element, or some other element didn't qualify. The third, is the supervisor themselves. They were receiving three year and five year chunks of time all at once and calling us and saying, "I can't legitimately, honestly verify these hours." For those three reasons, that's why the six-month rule or reporting requirement was instituted.

Samantha: Great. Our next question also comes from the webinar: "Why is there a Rolling Clock?"

Jared: Referring to the Rolling Clock related to the ARE. The Rolling Clock is actually one of those policies that didn't go into effect until, well, in fact in 2006. Up until that time, there hadn't been one. But the Rolling Clock really is—you have to think of it as an expiration date. If you take an exam and you pass that division, that division is valid for five years. And why does that matter? A lot of people really ask that question. Why is it only good for five years? Shouldn't it be good forever? I passed this division and I proved that I know this. One of the realities is throughout many professions, more than just architecture, the professions change. And we know that about NCARB and we know that about architecture and one of the things we do is we do a practice analysis of architecture every five to seven years. We actually just had in 2012, and that was a big deal.

For any of those out there who participated in it, thank you very much for your time. We know it was actually quite a large survey. You answered a lot of questions and gave us a lot of information about what you do, how frequently you do it, how important is it that task for what you do. We take that information and we go in and we update our test specification. Our test specification is really the blueprint, if you want to think about how you build our test.

Our test is constantly being updated on the inside and a lot of people don't realize that. They think that, well the test that was given five years ago was the same test as today, and it's not. Why we implemented the Rolling Clock was to validate the fact that you have passed the content of architecture all within the same timeframe. What we also then understand is once you passed your exams, those are locked in place. Then they are not going to expire but then you also have moved into licensure or then continuing education picks up.

Samantha: Great. Our next question comes from Amy on Twitter. She wants to know, "Why do I have to wait six months before we taking a failed ARE division?"

Jared: It's another good question. I get that one a lot. What is the purpose of the six-month wait? Some people believe that NCARB has imposed the six-month wait because we are forcing you to study. I hear that one a lot, you do this because you think I have to study for six months. That's not the answer. We do not think that you have to go study for six months to get ready to take the exam over again. The real reason that the six-month wait is in place, is it's actually a balance between security—because we have exam security that we keep in mind all of the time—as well as just how many different versions of the exam we publish. It is not a secret that NCARB produces more than one version of the exact same division. So, if all three of us happen to go into the test center at the exact same time to all take Construction Documents & Services, we can all be given a different version of that test. What we have to do is the spacing of six months, it's all about balancing security. We can't let you see the exam over and over again because it's over exposure, as well we need to make sure that we would never see the same version the second time.

If you do go in and fail, what is going to happen is the next time you test, you will get a different iteration of that same division.

Samantha: Okay. Our next question comes from the webinar: "Are you going to update the Practice Programs?"

Jared: We are not going to update the Practice Programs, simply put. NCARB has made a very great decision, in my opinion, that we are moving to ARE 5.0, as Sam mentioned earlier. And with ARE 5.0, there are not going to be any vignettes. We've also made that public. We did do a very in-depth investigation into updating our Practice Programs, and the reality is the financial investment to update the Practice Program to run on current software, the cost is actually quite unbelievable. I kid you not, it would be well over one million dollars to take the Practice Program we have and put it into a new system and to take on that burden of cost and then think that we would have to transfer that cost onto candidates is honestly not fair to the candidate, to say we want to raise your exam fees so that you have a new version of the test just so that we can get rid of this in a few years. This is not a good idea. We actually made the decision based on the fact that we don't want to financially penalize candidates who are studying and practicing for the exam.

Nick: For those struggling with it right now, I would actually encourage you to embrace what it is because I think there are actually a lot of good parts or components of that program and the fact that ultimately when you go into these tests, you have a certain amount of time. We give you a program per se and a code and say, “Do this like this.” The software that’s out there now only allows you to do so much. It really kind of constricts the amount of functionality you can throw in there and the content you can throw in. It allows you to focus on your program, which I think can be sometimes a side benefit that’s often overlooked.

Samantha: Great. Our next question also comes from the webinar, “How many IDP hours do you have to have before you can start taking your exam?”

Nick: Well, that varies per state. In most states today, you can take your ARE as soon as you finish the education requirement, which in most states is that NAAB-accredited degree requirement, so in that case it would be zero. You can start the ARE before you even begin IDP, before you log in 15 minutes of time. In other states, it’s a little bit different. Some states have a six-month requirement or a year requirement, or there are a few left where you actually have to complete the entire IDP first before being given access to the ARE. It’s actually a state-by-state issue. But more and more states every year are adopting the testing upon graduation concept.

Jared: I’d like to point out, we have a great tool. It’s a resource out there for you as a candidate or prospective candidate thinking about testing. If you go to our website, ncarb.org, go look at the jurisdictional requirements. It’s this orange button in the lower right hand corner. I point people to it all the time. You can go there and you can investigate the jurisdictions that you’re interested in gaining your initial license. And this is specifically one of the survey questions that we have asked each one of the jurisdictions is, what are your education requirements? What are your internship requirements, and then do you allow, what we call early eligibility, to the exam?

Samantha: Great. Our next question also comes from the webinar: “If all sections of the ARE are completed within five years but IDP is not yet completed, how long are the ARE scores valid?”

Jared: Forever. If you complete all divisions of the ARE within the five-year Rolling Clock, and again, it’s your five-year Rolling Clock then your exams are all locked-in and they are safe. We know with early eligibility that some people are testing, as Nick said. I haven’t heard of anybody who’s tested before they reported 15 minutes of IDP. Maybe it’s happened but if they complete the exam first, fantastic. You are set.

Nick: That would be a great place to be, because at that point you’re just working through IDP. You’re working at your firm and you can even be a little assertive about it and look at some supplementary experience and really try to get through it more quickly knowing that those AREs are out of the way. It would be a great place to be.

Samantha: Great. Maria on Facebook wants to know, “When will you release an Android version of My IDP?”

Nick: We’re working on it right now. We released the iPhone version first because that’s where the mass market is right now. But we are currently, as we speak, working on that Android version and we hope to have it out as soon as possible. Again, as I mentioned earlier, we have a team of software engineers in-house. We are doing it internally but we do hope to have it on the market and in your fingertips as soon as possible. We promise.

Samantha: Our next question comes from the webinar: “If the profession is constantly changing, how is IDP’s structure being updated as the ARE is?”

Nick: The IDP evolves just like the ARE over time. One of the things we use in IDP to help drive change is the practice analysis of architecture, and that’s something Jared touched around earlier. It’s a survey that actually went out two years ago in 2012. It actually asks the profession, what’s happening; what are you seeing; what’s changing? That helps drive the content and what things need to shift, or maybe they don’t need the shift. It might tell us that things are fair enough the way they are. That’s the main driver for content. However, we’re also looking at programmatic changes over time. One of the things we’re looking at right now is streamlining the IDP.

We have a special project going on that is looking at, does IDP the way it is today really correspond to how practice is done and how technology works and how people learn today. When it was originally designed back in the 1970s, people were doing a lot of hand drawing. The tools and techniques are much different. The office culture is so much different. We’re taking a look at that from a more qualitative perspective now and saying, are there some items we could streamline in the program? We hope to have those released for awareness for information within the coming year, some of the work we’ve been doing in terms of researching that topic.

Samantha: Okay. Our next question comes from the webinar: “Can I earn an IDP experience in a foreign country?”

Nick: Yes. Let’s talk about foreign experience as a whole because I think it’s more than just IDP but let’s answer the question specifically. The answer is yes. There are two specific ways in which you can earn IDP in a foreign country. The first is working for a foreign architect. Let’s say you’re in Madrid for instance, working for an office there underneath a Spanish architect. That would be experience Setting O, which is fantastic, you can earn all the hours and all the different areas except that it’s limited to approximately 1 year’s worth of hours. However, if you’re in a foreign office but working underneath the direct supervision of a U.S. architect, you can complete your entire IDP abroad. Let’s say you’re in an office in London working underneath licensed over here in the U.S. Your entire program could be completed in that fashion, which also leads to the ARE being completed abroad as well.

Jared: Right, because one of the recent things that we’ve launched with the ARE is we started hearing from our candidate population that they are working globally and they’re looking for opportunities to test and unfortunately a few years ago, if you were overseas and wanted to test, you had to fly back to North America to book an appointment and show up at a test center. We just recently launched test centers. We have test centers in London and we have one in Abu Dhabi and we’re actually looking at other locations around the world where we can start delivering the ARE.

Nick: And to round it all out with education, there’s actually an accredited degree abroad over in the Middle East right now. If you really wanted to, you could do your education, your experience, and your examination all abroad.

Samantha: Great. This next question comes from the webinar. “Can I start IDP if I have a B.Arch from an unaccredited school and plan on going to an accredited masters program later?”

Nick: Sure, going back to the eligibility date change we talked about at the beginning. As soon as you graduated high school, now you're eligible to begin IDP. The issues regarding B.Archs or M.Archs or pre-professional degrees is kind of a moot point at this juncture. As soon as you graduated high school, you're eligible to begin IDP.

Samantha: Great. We just got another question about taking the ARE abroad. "When are we going to launch test centers in Hong Kong?"

Jared: That is another good question. It's actually one of the other locations we're working on right now. What we have found out, every country's a little bit different as we want to sort of spin up a test center over there, and so different jurisdictions have different requirements. We have gone back and forth consistently with Hong Kong. We're actually getting very close. I feel we're very close. Hopefully, we will be making announcement shortly saying you can now schedule your exams in Hong Kong.

Samantha: Great. This next question comes from the webinar. "When you say ARE 5.0 is launching in late 2016, did that mean dual testing under 4.0 and 5.0? Will they begin at that time or before that time?"

Jared: Let's first of all talk about dual testing is, because that is sort of an idea that when we start ARE 5.0, we are not going to immediately turn off ARE 4.0. We need to calm people down if you think, he said that have to get done by late 2016. But that is not what I said. What I'm trying to say is that in late 2016, ARE 5.0 is going to start. At that time, ARE 4.0 will be ongoing and will continue to be delivered at that time, so really, there will be a moment where candidates will be testing an ARE 4.0 and ARE 5.0 at the same time. We'll have some candidates in one path, some candidates in another path.

Samantha: When can candidates expect to learn about the transition plan?

Jared: The transition plan, that's a big deal. A lot of people really want to know about the transition plans so we are actually currently working on exactly what the transition is going to look like. We are going to be releasing all of the information about the transition this coming spring, so very shortly it's going to be coming out. Again, don't think you have to immediately rush and think about how the transition is going to impact you, because as I answered Vince earlier, Vince has a long time to get done with 4.0 before he would even have to consider worrying about the transition.

Nick: I mean it seems at this point, it's best to put all your efforts towards finishing what you're going through right now and really focusing on the ARE as your plan dictates for this year. We just started this year, so I hope many of you out there have a plan in place to finish by the end of the year. If that's the case, focus on that and make that your priority until more information comes out.

Samantha: Our next question comes from the webinar. What will replace vignettes in ARE 5.0?

Jared: That's another good question. It's not that we're just going to get rid of the vignettes and that's it. We have spent several years looking at various item types. This is why I could talk to you for hours about testing, because I've actually spent years working on what ARE 5.0 is going to become. We are currently in what we call a proof of concept stage where we are developing three new item types that will be linked in with our current item types. Right now we have our standard multiple choice, we have our check all that applies, and we have our quantitative fill in the blanks. Along with those, we are developing an item called a drag and place item type.

Some of you if you worked in sort of multi-disciplinarian firms and you know when you're a landscape architect, this is actually an item type that the landscape architecture exam has rolled out recently. And we sort of studied what they had done, and we liked what we saw. How the item was being implemented. Some of the measurement opportunities we really have. We've decided that that would be a good item pick for us to also consider using.

There's another item type. They're called the hotspot item type. What it allows you to do is to present a graphic to an individual and say, "Given this graphic, please identify the following—whatever location or flashing, appropriate location of control joint, whatever you can imagine," you could ask somebody to identify an image and that's what the question could be.

The third item type that's really not just an item type. It's what are called case studies. And the case studies are really the true, fantastic aspect of what ARE 5.0 is because right now in ARE 4.0, every item is what we call a discrete item. You're given a question, you answer it. It's worth one point and then you move on to the next question. You answer it. It's worth one point. You move on. With the case study, what it really is going to allow us to do is we're going to give you a share a set of resources so you may get a drawing. You may get a code, a section of the code. You may get a zoning page, and then we're going to ask you multiple questions about the scenario and really allow you to demonstrate your knowledge understanding how architecture really isn't discrete moments but it really is the understanding of multiple pieces of knowledge all being linked together to make decisions. Again, this is why we're really excited about what ARE 5.0 is because that linking and decision-making is truly what we do as architects and this is where 5.0 is taking us.

Samantha: Great. Our next question also comes from the webinar. "I'm not living in the state where I want to be initially licensed, will I have to travel to my preferred state to take the exam?"

Jared: You will not. That's one of the great benefits of working with a company like Prometric, which has test centers all over the country, is that you can take your test wherever you want to take your test and then that score will be reported to whichever jurisdiction you want it recorded to. You can live in Minnesota—as I did and I was testing in Minnesota. I wanted to be an architect in Minnesota but I took all of my tests in North Dakota. It was actually closer for me to drive across the border and go to that test center.

Samantha: Our next question comes from the webinar. "Do you recommend that I complete my IDP while still in school?"

Nick: Wow, that's a very personal question. I think it depends upon your career path and your intentions and where you as an individual plan on going with your career. I encourage people to get started as soon as they can, which is clearly in school. If you're having good experience, you should document as much of it as you can as you go through school. If you have the opportunity to finish it earlier, I believe finishing it earlier allows you to get your license earlier and clearly move on in your profession earlier. To me, that makes a lot of sense. Most people don't have that opportunity or that option. Usually IDP hours are accrued through summer jobs or part-time employment while in school, which ultimately is sometimes hard to get 5600 hours before graduation. But absolutely if you would finish it prior to school I would think that would be a huge advantage leading into your career. I wouldn't necessary advise it one way or the other in terms of whether it's better or worst to wait or do it while in school. I just think when you look at your entire career plan earlier is better. The earlier I could have a license and begin practicing and begin moving up in my profession, the better. That would be my personal opinion.

Samantha: Great. Someone in the webinar wants to know, “Can I earn an experience in Setting A under a foreign architect?”

Nick: This goes again back to the foreign architect question, the foreign work experience. Experience in Work Setting A can only be accrued if you’re working under the direct supervision of a U.S. registered architect in an architectural office. That U.S. registered architect may be in London and may also be licensed in the United Kingdom, in which case that would be acceptable. However, if they didn’t have that U.S. registration, then the answer would be no. Work setting A all depends on that U.S. registration and the environment of architecture firm.

Samantha: “How do I know if I’m done with the IDP?”

Nick: Hopefully, you’d be checking your app on a continual basis, and you would see your progress. You could also see it through the online reporting system. When you’re going in, you’re going to see progress that is to where you are. As soon as you finish, you’ll see all those bars turn green and know you’re complete. At that point, you’d want to go into the system, and if you haven’t yet, began to ask for eligibility to the ARE. If you’ve already asked for that eligibility, then we’re going to keep moving you through the ARE process until the end at which time we’ll transfer all of your information to the state board, in most cases.

Jared: It is, and I would say the reality is you’re really going to know when you’re done with IDP because it is one of those moments that I think everybody goes through in their professional path. When you first start IDP and all of those bars are empty, it looks like a lot, and it’s amazing though how as you’re constantly reporting and you’re working, those bars start filling up and that’s a good feeling when see those green bars fill up and you know when those green bars are full. What’s great about it too, as Nick have said, you’re tracking your progress and that’s what really allows you to say, “Okay, I know I’m done in these areas but I know I’m not done in these areas,” and that allows you to start that dialog with your supervisor.

Nick: To round it out, we don’t actually issue an IDP complete certificate or anything like that. If that’s what you’re kind of looking for or looking to hear, then that’s not the case. But it is all trackable on the app and through the online reporting system.

Samantha: Great. Someone from the webinar wants to know, “What are the new initial costs to sign up for IDP?”

Nick: There’s two paths. The initial application fee for an NCARB records is \$350. However, you could pay that upfront when you start or you can choose a student option if you’re currently enrolled in school or within six months of graduation. That’s a \$100. You paid a \$100 upfront and then you would pay the balance of \$250 whenever you’re ready to take the ARE—whether that’s six months from now or six years from now. That’s kind of how the initial structure is set up. Whether you pay the \$350 or the \$100, it’s good for three years. At the end of that 3-year period, then the annual renewal fee of \$75 kicks in. All of those fees are on our website and they are subject to change from year to year, so I would encourage anyone seeing this to stay on top of that. If you haven’t signed up yet or if you’re curious what the fees are from year to year. You have to check that fee structure on our website.

Samantha: Someone from the webinar asked, “What is NCARB doing to ensure employees are providing interns with quality IDP experience?”

Nick: I would highlight the IDP coordinator program as the main example, and I would highlight our outreach program as another example. If you're not familiar with the IDP coordinator program, it's a nationwide network of professionals dedicated to making sure people are aware about the licensure process. They understand the licensure process and sometimes mentoring people through the process. That's a great resource either locally in your state, at your school, or maybe even in your office. As somebody who could help you through this process if you're stuck in a particular area, having trouble at your firm, maybe just having trouble in your particular career stage, whatever it is.

The other element is our outreach program. A variety of us here in the office, we travel around the country giving presentations at AIA components, at schools of architecture, at conferences. Anywhere where we can get on the docket to kind of explain the process, provide some strategies, and provide some perspective. Again, if you see those events come to your hometown, or if you see us around the corner, please come up because it's not just here are the rules and regulations. We really try to give you some perspective and again some of the strategies. Most of us who do the outreach are architects and have been through the process ourselves so we can give you some strategic tips and some ideas that maybe we did ourselves or have acknowledged since coming to work for NCARB.

Jared: I would like to one thing that NCARB really does to help the supervisor is to provide information to you, to the intern because you honestly are your best resource. The fact that you want to have that dialog, you want to go in to your supervisor and talk to him about where you're at in the process, what you have left. What your requirements are that are remaining in IDP. It's actually one of the best things you could do and if you need to explain to them a little bit about what IDP is, that's actually the best thing you can do because it's building that relationship where they understand you want to be that professional, you want to earn that license and they're going to open up to the idea of really sharing things with you.

Samantha: "How do I log construction experience?"

Nick: There's a couple of different ways depending on what you're actually doing on a construction site. The most popular two ways are found in the experience setting S, which is supplemental experience. There's two ways that that can count in two different fashions. The first is designing construction management related experience. That's if you're actually out on site doing some type of construction management role, maybe you're supervisor or site foreman or something like that, you may fall into that construction management related section. However, if you're doing activities that we colloquially call swinging the hammer, things like framing, or roofing, or grading. Those fall in the construction work side of supplemental experience and it also qualifies. The difference is in terms of core versus elective. If you're in construction management, you can actually earn core hours towards construction documents, schematic design, systems coordination. If you're in construction work, which is the swing and the hammer type activities, those are elective hours only. That's the two differences there.

Samantha: We have another IDP question about earning experience. This is a two-part question. "What's the best way to gain supplemental experience and then if hours in one category exceed requirement, do they automatically get moved to supplemental hours?"

Nick: By far and I think, this is a personal opinion because there are a variety of supplemental experience options and there's a lot of them. If you haven't seen those, definitely check them out in our IDP guidelines. But I personally think that the best option is the Emerging Professionals Companion, the EPC. It's www.epcompanion.org. It's a free website which is essentially a free workbook with activities in all of the different experience areas of IDP.

If you're having trouble getting work and bidding in contract negotiation for instance, there's a variety of activities you can do to earn hours. Something like engineering systems coordination is there, business operations. Whatever it is, there are opportunities, and again, it's free on that website to earn IDP hours. You do those activities on your own time and you have a mentor which is essentially any registered architect approve them and each activity earns eight hours. It's by far the most under-utilized but I think the most valuable opportunities within supplemental experience. The second question, Sam, was about, can you refresh my memory?

Samantha: "If hours in one category exceed requirements, do they automatically get moved into the supplemental experience category?"

Nick: Sure. They automatically get moved into the elective category. Essentially, as you accrue hours, you're logging them into different core experience areas. Let's take programming, building up to that 80-hour of requirement in programming. Once you hit 81, that one hour is then moved over into your elective bucket towards your 1,860 elective hours. So yes, the answer is all overages do apply to the elective bucket, but supplemental experience is a specific experience setting and a little bit different so I want to make sure that terminology is clear.

Samantha: "Why do I need to apply for an eligibility date when you've already verified my accredited Bachelor of Architecture degree?"

Nick: Sure. In this case, we want to make sure that the experience that you're logging for IDP occurs after that particular date. For instance, there could be scenarios where you may have work experience that occurred prior to even enrolling in your B.Arch or your undergraduate whatever it is. That high school diploma date tells us that the work you accrued is after than and qualifies for IDP. I think that's a short, simple answer. I hope that qualifies.

Samantha: "Can you earn IDP hours when you're getting an M.Arch degree?"

Jared: Again, absolutely. It really does come down to—it may seem too simple, but it really is the fact that once you graduate from high school, experience is experience and you want to report that experience. Nick: Absolutely. I think I understand a lot of these question because up until recently, eligibility dates were confusing part of IDP and in a lot of ways, it was an extra loophole to kind of jump through that not everybody was either aware of or understood. Now, that it's been streamlined to the point of high school graduation, I'm hoping that that's a much clearer process and much easier, frankly for everybody out there.

Samantha: Our next question is for Jared. "Does the ARE varies from state to state?"

Jared: It does not. The ARE is the exact same exam across all jurisdictions. The exact same seven divisions. They do the exact same thing. The forms were built exactly the same. It is the same. On top of that, I will say, some states do, after you have completed the ARE will have a separate supplemental exam. The one that's very up and down is the California supplemental exam for people who want to get license in California but there, then they require you to complete the ARE first then you complete the California supplemental.

Samantha: Great. We're getting a lot of great questions through the webinar. This next one, I think it's for Nick. "Can you tell us a little bit more about the 80 hours of leadership/community service. For instance, what sort of volunteer or community service would apply and does it need to be approved by an architect?"

Nick: Sure. Leadership and service is essentially what it says. Leadership and service. In most cases, it's a volunteer service for a charitable organization. Something like Habitat for Humanity or Freedom By Design, something along those lines. However, it doesn't have to be architecture related so, if you're organizing or putting on a charity 5k, for instance or helping out at a homeless shelter or doing something along those lines. That also qualifies. It's any type of service on a volunteer basis. Also, I want to highlight that it's leadership. It's not just service. If you happen to be on a committee or some type of leadership structure like that, serving on a committee with the AIAS, AIA, even here at NCARB perhaps. That qualifies. Maybe you're on your leadership board at your local GBCI chapter. That's the Green Building Council. All that stuff qualifies. Absolutely, there's a variety of ways in which to earn those hours.

The second part of that question about approval because there is such a variety of ways to earn hours, there's a variety of ways that we accept to approve those hours. It's either your IDP supervisor at your employment, which doesn't always have to be an architect, depending on what setting you're in, it could be a mentor which is any essentially registered architect. A friend, colleague, past professor or something like that, or simply somebody at that organization where you volunteered. That may seem the simplest but in some cases it's actually the most difficult because those folks aren't always aware of what IDP is or exactly what you're going through. It may actually be easier to use a mentor or your IDP supervisor, but any of those there options are acceptable for approval.

Samantha: Great. We have a question from Twitter. Chris wants to know, "Can interns who received stipends earn IDP hours?"

Nick: Sure. I think that goes back to the paid component of IDP and the fact that you must be employed in order to earn IDP hours. How we at NCARB understand this or apply this is that, as long as you've been paid for your services it's good enough for us. We're not going to go back in and check your tax returns but we do want to know that you weren't taken advantage of, so to speak. Stipends come in all different shapes and sizes but in most cases if I had to give an answer, I'd say yes, the stipend is a payment for service and that's fine, and ultimately what we're trying to prevent against is unpaid internships where interns are taken advantage of where simply because you have to go through this licensure process, your firm is kind of working against you and we don't want that to happen. That's kind of the point there and you can apply that I think universally to any situation whether it's stipend or other.

Samantha: Great. This next question comes from the webinar. "Why do I need to be a member of the AIA to complete exercises from the EPC?"

Nick: I'll take this one as well.

Jared: Sure. It comes down to—I can jump in for a little bit. It really comes down to the fact that when you're completing these ideas, and the EPC is actually a joint effort. That is how it was established. You need to understand that this isn't just an NCARB thing that we're working in collaboration with AIA to make this happen. One of the real benefits of getting that AIA member number is that then you can do other continuing education activities, launch and learns, things like that. They will all start to populate your AIA transcript. You can then submit that for additional IDP credit.

Nick: Sure. I have to be very clear about this in one particular manner though. You don't actually have to be a member of the AIA to utilize this option through supplemental experience. You simply have to have an AIA number and there's a significant difference there.

And the reason there is, is because the AIA will actually grant you as an intern going through the IDP, an AIA number specifically for the purposes of documenting something like the EPC or AIA continuing education. They then use that to track usage rates and data and things like that to help improve the EPC or their continuing education offerings or other items. Again, as Jared mentioned, the EPC is actually a joint effort with the AIA. They do a lot of work in helping us to create that document. They're very interested to know who's using it and how many people are using it and how they're using it. That's why that AIA number is required in that case.

If you're interested in getting an AIA number for this purpose, there's actually a website in our *IDP Guidelines* and that will actually direct you straight to the form they required to simply request an AIA number. Again, to be crystal clear about it, you don't need to be an actual AIA member.
Jared: You do not have to join AIA.

Nick: You just have to have an AIA number, which you can get for free.

Samantha: Great. I think we have time for one more question. This one is from Facebook. Lucas wants to know, "Why is the ARE grading process a secret?" Real quick, Jared.

Jared: Real quick, it is not a secret. We have lots of information on our website about how the ARE is graded. Again, this is a more complicated question, you're making me go quick. What I would like to say is, if you have those questions, keep asking them because Sam is keeping track of all of these stuff, and when we can start responding to these on the blog which might be a much better way for us to do this because I can give you a little more information as to what the grading process is. How we go through it. What's the difference between the way that a vignette is graded versus multiple choice and then how those two scores are merged together to give you a final score. But it is not a secret. If you feel it is, then you need to ask because I would gladly give you the answer.

Samantha: Right. And we'll actually be posting a recap, a video recap of this webinar on our blog, so be sure to check back then. And we're going to try to answer all the questions that we didn't get through because we did get a lot of fantastic questions that we can certainly address.

Nick: Yeah, and if I could put a shout-out to our customer relations department, 202/879-0520, customerservice@ncarb.org. They're on the lines 8:30 to 5:30, Monday through Friday, eastern time. Please give them a shout.

Samantha: Again if you have additional questions, feel free to reach out to us on social media or by calling customer service, and we'd like to thank you all again for joining us and submitting your questions. We'll see you next time!

Nick: See you.

Jared: Thanks!