



THE AMERICAN  
INSTITUTE  
OF ARCHITECTS

# Issue Brief

The American Institute of Architects • Government Advocacy • Current Issue Position and Analysis

## ARE Timing

### Key Points:

- *The 2005 Internship & Career Survey, co-sponsored by the AIA, ArchVoices and NCARB, confirmed that the time to complete the IDP is four to five years, considerably longer on average than the three years it is designed to take*
- *Currently, seven states allow some form of overlap of internship and examination eligibility (California, Texas, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Florida, Arizona and Vermont). In all of these states, candidates do not receive their licenses to practice architecture until all education, experience and examination requirements for that state have been fulfilled.*
- *The 2005 AIA/ArchVoices/NCARB Internship & Career Survey revealed that 84% of respondents (including interns and recently licensed architects) stated that if given the choice, they would prefer to take the ARE upon graduation or concurrent with internship.*
- *Passage of the ARE prior to completion of the IDP does not excuse interns from completing their internship requirements before they receive their licenses.*

The American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20006-5292  
Phone: 202-626-7505  
Fax: 202-626-7583  
E-mail: [govaffs@aia.org](mailto:govaffs@aia.org)  
Website: [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)

## ARE Timing and Practice

### AIA Position

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) supports architectural registration boards' allowing interns for licensure candidacy to take the ARE following their graduation from a NAAB-accredited degree program and concurrent with enrollment in the Intern Development Program (IDP).

### Action Sought

The AIA urges NCARB member boards to take an affirmative vote to permit interns to take divisions of the Architect Registration Examination (ARE) following graduation from a National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accredited degree program and concurrent with enrollment in the IDP. Individual state licensure boards are encouraged to enact regulatory amendments permitting interns to take the all divisions of the ARE. In states where examination eligibility is assessed as a matter of statutory compliance, the AIA advocates for the initiation of a timely process by which such statutes may be amended. Where model language is needed for regulatory modification, the AIA will provide examples of existing and proposed language from states where such eligibility currently exists or is pending.

### Explanation and Justification

In the majority of states, the pathway to licensure as an architect requires candidates to complete a three-step process of education, experience and examination. Among these requirements, timing of eligibility for the ARE is a key factor limiting the tendency of many candidates to complete the exam and continue to pursue a career in the practice of architecture as a licensed architect.

Allowing interns the ability to take any and all divisions of the ARE concurrent with enrollment in IDP will mitigate an impediment to obtaining licensure and further enable the kind of individualized career development for which the IDP was intended. In this way, promoting the acquisition of experience in tandem with examination allows candidates to focus on the substance of their professional development while maintaining all existing requirements of licensure which have been established to safeguard public health safety and welfare. Moreover, by allowing examination upon graduation from an accredited program, interns will be able to start the licensure process at a point at which they are both most familiar with certain portions of the exam and in best position to study before commitments to family and work increase significantly. This flexibility is crucial for today's licensure candidate.

It is in the best interest of the profession to monitor and address the long term impacts of declining registration rates. Significant numbers of architecture school graduates are choosing to pursue alternative career paths. While this in itself is not a cause for concern, when compounded with increasing attrition from among the ranks of interns who have set out for a career in traditional practice, the profession of architecture in the U.S. may be viewed to be in the midst of a serious 'brain drain'. Unnecessary regulatory impediments to licensure only threaten to further erode the pool of most talented and ambitious graduates seeking to enter the practice of architecture.

For more information contact the State and Local Affairs team at 202-626-7507 or [govaffs@aia.org](mailto:govaffs@aia.org).

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