

MICHIGAN ARCHITECT PROFESSIONAL LICENSING GUIDE

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1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide looks at things that you as a foreign-educated architect must do to become eligible for architect licensing in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background and tips on the larger architect profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to rebuild your career.

REGULATING ARCHITECTS

The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), Bureau of Professional Licensing (BPL) regulates the practice of architecture in Michigan and grants licensure as a Licensed Professional Architect.

The National Council of Architectural Registration Board (NCARB) also plays a significant role in qualifying architects for professional licensing. Their services include:

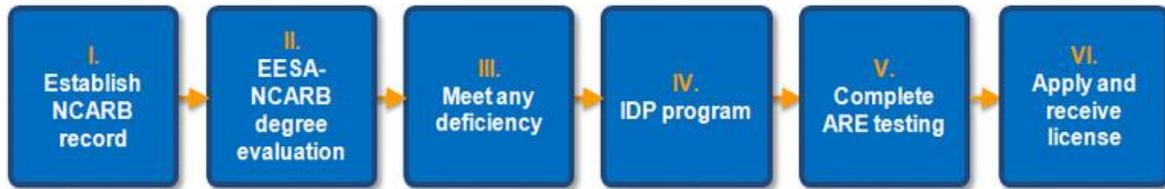
- Verification of training and experience through a three-year Intern Development Program (IDP)
- Skills assessment through professional examination called an Architect Registration Exam (ARE)
- National credentialing called NCARB Certification - once you are licensed in Michigan, this is a tool to become licensed in several states. It is available only to highly experienced professionals, as defined by NCARB
- Compilation and maintenance of training and credentials through an online subscription service

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

This guide assumes that you are not licensed as an architect anywhere in the US. To become licensed in Michigan you must follow the process of Licensure by Acceptance of Examination. Architects with a license in another state of the US can pursue Licensure by Endorsement. You must be licensed in Michigan in order to practice architecture in the state.

Foreign-educated architectural candidates need to meet several requirements to receive a license as an architect in Michigan. Throughout the process you will work closely with NCARB, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. You will need to use the Internet extensively to correspond with NCARB and you will have to learn to use their web-based applications to maintain your records online.

Steps to licensing are as follows:



I. ESTABLISH AN NCARB COUNCIL RECORD

First, you should familiarize yourself with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and the licensing process and explore the NCARB and BPL websites. Then you must establish a record on the NCARB website. You fill out an application form and you pay a fee of \$350 to begin (\$100 initially if you graduated university in the last six months. You will have to pay the remaining \$250 before you take the Architect Registration Examination [ARE]). After the first year you will pay \$75 to maintain your record until you finish the licensing process.

To read more about this, please go to the *Important Links* section.

II. EVALUATE YOUR FOREIGN DEGREE THROUGH EDUCATION EVALUATION SERVICES FOR ARCHITECTS (EESA) AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURAL REGISTRATION BOARDS (NCARB)

Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) is the credentialing organization you must use. EESA evaluates the degrees of foreign-educated architects and others who have not graduated from professional architectural schools accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).

For internationally-educated applicants, a complete application package must include the following documents:

- Signed National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) application, including your NCARB file number
- Official transcripts for all coursework to consider as well as official translated copies (submission of a portfolio is optional and should only relate to coursework, not professional experience)
- Translated and certified copies of all diplomas/certificates if originals are not in English
- Translated and certified academic course descriptions if originals are not in English

The Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) and the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) define official translations as those that are certified by a professional translator working into English. They must come from an official source, such as an academic institution, lawyer, translation service, notary or embassy.

The cost of this degree evaluation is \$1,900. When it is complete, EESA-NAAB sends a copy of all reports directly to NCARB and the information is added to your record.

This evaluation will give very specific details about where your education/degree does not meet the standards of an architecture program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).

Deficiencies may be identified in one of 6 categories:

- General Education
- Technical Systems
- Practice
- Design
- History, Human Behavior, and Environment
- Elective Subjects

The evaluation will state if your degree is equivalent to either a US professional degree (B.Arch or M.Arch equivalent) or a pre-professional degree (technical school or 4-year Bachelor's). This will determine the amount of training required for you to qualify for licensure in Michigan. We will explain this in the step describing the Intern Development Program.

You should invest the time at the beginning to provide the most complete documentation you can! It costs you an extra \$250 each time you provide more documents after your first evaluation. (This process is called Reconsideration).

If you disagree with the evaluation even when there are no more documents you can provide, you can challenge the evaluation only once (this process is called an Appeal).

III. MEET ANY IDENTIFIED DEFICIENCIES

You must correspond with Education Evaluations Services for Architects (EESA) to get its approval before you take any coursework to meet a deficiency in your record. There is no fee for EESA to update your record as you meet the deficiencies it identified, however you must send EESA official transcripts and course descriptions for these courses.

IV. PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, MEETING PROPER CONDITIONS FOR EXPERIENCE

The next step in the process of becoming a Professional Architect is to participate as an Architect Intern in the Intern Development Program or IDP. You will have to find employment opportunities at this time that provide the right conditions for you to meet the training requirements of the program.

To satisfy the Intern Development Program (IDP) requirements you need to earn 5,600 qualifying training hours (3,740 core experience hours and 1,860 elective experience hours). Acquiring 5,600 training hours will take you two and a half years of full-time work to complete if every hour counts towards your program. Obviously, the program can take much longer for some people to complete.

Your experience in architectural practice outside the US can meet only some of the Intern Development Program (IDP) training requirements. The maximum credit allowed for foreign experience in architecture is 1,860 training hours if you worked under the supervision of an architect not registered in the US or Canada.

The Intern Development Program (IDP) spreads 5,600 training hours across four skill categories. Each category has a minimum number of units you must earn in it.

- Category 1: Pre-Design - 260 hours
 - Category 2: Design - 2,600 hours
 - Category 3: Project Management - 720 hours
 - Category 4: Practice Management - 160 hours
 - Electives (your choice across any set of categories) - 1,800 hours
- Total: 5,600 hours

You can earn these credits in different types of settings or workplaces. Some of these are limited in the amount of training hours you can earn in them. The ideal training setting, is participating in IDP as an Intern in a traditional full-service firm, under direct supervision of a registered architect, with an opportunity to gain experience in all 4 training categories.

You work directly with National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) during your period as an architectural intern. NCARB uses an online system called the Electronic Experience Verification Reporting system, called e-EVR, to build your record of required experience. Intern Development Program (IDP) participants use e-EVR to create, track, and seek approval of experience reports. Once a supervising architect approves an experience report you submit, that report will be registered in your NCARB record.

After you complete the requirements of the Intern Development Program (IDP) the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) will confirm your status and explain the next steps.

V. COMPLETE ARE TESTING

Testing is another major step in your process. The Architect Registration Exam or ARE is also managed through the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). NCARB will confirm that you have met the requirements of BPL for testing before authorizing you to take the ARE. You cannot request testing directly from BPL.

VI. APPLY FOR LICENSURE BY ACCEPTANCE OF EXAM

Once you have passed all Divisions of the Architect Registration Exam (ARE), you have only 1 year to apply to BPL for Licensure by Acceptance of Examination.

Your application package to BPL must include the following items:

- Application for Architect's License
- NCARB Council Record, which will include:
 - Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) and National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) Evaluation Report (your foreign degree evaluation)A copy of your NCARB Intern Development Program (IDP) evaluation
 - English language competency: either provide verification that your architectural program was taught in English, or provide TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores (tests and their minimum accepted scores are: a TOEFL-iBT of 26 on the speaking module and total of 88 overall; a written TOEFL of 550 or computer based TOEFL of 213 plus the Test of Spoken English (TSE) of 50)
 - VE-ARC, a form to report your employment between finishing the IDP program and passing the Architect Registration Exam (ARE)
 - Fee: \$65

3. TESTS

The Architect Registration Exam (ARE) is the only exam required for licensing in Michigan for an Architect. You have only one year after passing the ARE to apply for licensing in Michigan.

ARCHITECT REGISTRATION EXAM LOGISTICS

The Architect Registration Exam (ARE) 4.0 is administered by a testing company called Prometric, which has test centers nationwide. Candidates have many scheduling options including center location, time (subject to available seats), and testing order for the 7 testing areas, called Divisions. You take one Division per testing session at a cost of \$210 each. Rescheduling an appointment costs \$35. Scores are usually available within a month of testing and are reported to the BPL who then informs the candidate. If you fail a Division you must wait six months before retaking it. You must pass all divisions within a 5-year time frame.

ARCHITECT REGISTRATION EXAM (ARE) TECHNOLOGY AND CONTENT AREAS

The ARE 4.0 Test is computer-based. It is comprised of 7 Divisions, each with a section of multiple-choice questions and another section with "vignettes" - situational problems that require you to interact with graphics. The descriptions that follow are Division Statements quoted from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) website. The time frames are the duration you should set aside for each exam, although the tests may take less time.

- Programming Planning and Practice - 4 hours
"The application of project development knowledge and skills relating to architectural programming; environmental, social, and economic issues; codes and regulations; and project and practice management"
- Site Planning and Design - 4.5 hours
"The application of knowledge and skills of site planning and design including environmental, social, and economic issues, project and practice management"
- Building Design and Construction Systems - 5.5 hours
"The application of knowledge and skills of building design and construction, including environmental, social, and economic issues, project and practice management"
- Schematic Design - 6 hours
"The application of knowledge and skills required for the schematic design of buildings and interior space planning"
- Structural Systems - 5.5 hours
"Identification and incorporation of general structural and lateral force principles in the design and construction of buildings"
- Building Systems - 4 hours
"The evaluation, selection, and integration of mechanical, electrical, and specialty systems in building design and construction"
- Construction Documents and Services - 4 hours
"Application of project management and professional practice knowledge and skills, including the preparation of contract documents and contract administration"

PREPARING FOR THE ARCHITECT REGISTRATION EXAM (ARE)

See *Important Links* for ARE 4.0 exam information and free study resources. Study resources include software simulations to familiarize you with test content and are very important to practice prior to your testing appointments.

4. TIME AND COSTS

Evaluating your foreign degree and achieving licensing as an Architect in Michigan depends on many factors including:

- The completeness of your educational and professional records (the more documentation, the better)
- The efficiency of your home country's system in compiling and transmitting your university records
- The quality of your relationships with architect mentors and their responsiveness to your requests to certify your experience
- Your performance on all 7 Divisions of Architect Registration Exam (ARE)
- Your free time and money to spend on the process

We provide two hypothetical scenarios to show some of the variety of results that immigrant professionals may find when they seek to become architects in Michigan. Please consider these scenarios as two examples out of many possibilities. Your experience will vary.

TWO HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS FOR LICENSING AS A PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT:

Step	More Efficient Scenario <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i>	Less Efficient Scenario <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i>
1 Establish NCARB Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You open your NCARB record online and renew it 2 times later in the licensing process • \$500 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You open your NCARB record online and renew it 5 times later in the licensing process • \$725
2 Degree Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a very detailed documentation of your architectural education • Your documents do not require translation • 4 - 6 months + \$1,700 - \$2,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your documents need to be gathered and translated • You pay for your Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) foreign degree evaluation to be reconsidered once when you submit extra documents • 12 - 14 months + \$2,800 - \$3,000
3 Meet Educational Deficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Education Evaluation Services for Architects foreign degree evaluation identifies deficiencies that you can meet by taking just 4 university courses (12 credit hours) • 9 - 12 months + \$3,600 - \$4,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation identifies several course deficiencies that take you 2 years to complete • 2 years + \$7,000 - \$7,400
4 Intern Development Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You begin the IDP and receive credit for 1,600 training hours based on your prior work experience • You complete your IDP efficiently in 2 1/2 years • 2 1/2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You begin your IDP and receive credit for only 800 training hours based on prior work experience • You complete your IDP with interruptions over 5 years • 5 years
5 Qualify for ARE and Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes you 6 months to pass all divisions of Architect Registration Exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes you 10 months to pass all divisions of Architect Registration Exam; you fail two divisions and must retake them

Step	More Efficient Scenario <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i>	Less Efficient Scenario <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 months + \$1,500 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 months + \$1,900
6 Apply for and receive license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your license application is approved 6 months later by IDFPR 6 month + \$100 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your license application is approved 6 months later by IDFPR 6 month + \$100
	More Efficient Total <i>About 5 years and \$8,000</i>	Less Efficient Total <i>About 10 years and \$13,000</i>

5. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

Preparing for licensing takes a significant amount of time, money, and effort. Some architects choose to seek lower-level positions on the road to their longer-term licensing goals. A job with fewer responsibilities but the ability to participate in the IDP program may offer some distinct advantages:

- Build job security
- Polish technology skills
- Adapt to the US workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment
- Have more energy left over to focus on preparing licensing exams.

You should be honest with your employer about your long-term plans and be sure that they understand how you can contribute to their company's objectives.

ENTRY-LEVEL

Architectural Detailer - Computer-Aided Design and Drafting

A position as an Architectural Detailer requires mastery of CADD software. If you do not have these skills you can take specific training courses at a technical school. Most US-educated CADD detailers have only a technical school education, so you will seem very overqualified by comparison. If this is a job you want in order to become licensed, be honest about your long term goals.

HIGH END

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification Professional

Green building is a growth area in the architectural field and LEED certification administered by the US Green Building Council is the accepted standard for evaluating green building - design that focuses on more efficient use of resources such as energy, water and materials - and rehabilitation projects. You may wish to consider getting the steps to become certified to assess projects as a LEED professional.

Project Management Professional Certification

If your prior experience included managing architectural projects, and you have particularly strong communication and organizational skills, you may want to consider qualifying for Project

Management Professional (PMP) certification from the Project Management Institute. The PMP is a widely-recognized credential that can support a background in architecture very well. It is one way to work actively in the architecture field without having to hold professional licensure.

6. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Your Michigan license will expire on October 31 two years after the initial license and every two years thereafter. You will receive notices to renew and can do so online through BPL.

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

An Architect who holds a license for more than 12 months, but less than 24 months from the date of initial licensure, shall obtain 12 hours of continuing education in Health, Safety, and Welfare subjects for the first renewal period, and an Architect who holds a license for 24 months or more from the date of initial licensure shall obtain 24 hours of continuing education in Health, Safety, and Welfare subjects for the 2-year renewal period. The licensee must maintain records of continuing education hours earned for 4 consecutive years in case they are audited. The records must include the courses or activities completed, the dates the courses or activities were held, the sponsoring organization, the continuing education hours earned, and any other supporting documentation. There are many ways in which these hours can be earned, such as through college courses, seminars, and distance learning courses, but special rules do apply. Anyone interested in being licensed as an Architect should check the LARA website for details, or consider joining a professional association that offers CE opportunities to members.

LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)

The state of Michigan does not honor the architect licenses of other states. It grants licensing to architects only by Acceptance of Examination (the process described in this topic) or by Endorsement (where an Architect licensed in another state must meet all Michigan requirements for licensing).

NCARB CERTIFICATION AND THE BROADLY EXPERIENCED FOREIGN ARCHITECT (BEFA) PROGRAM

NCARB Certification is an elite credential that is highly regarded in the United States. About 1/3 of licensed architects go on to become certified by NCARB. It is not a license to practice architecture across the country - it shows that an experienced professional architect has met a high standard of education and practice. Many states consider NCARB certification as meeting their criteria for education and experience, but each state can ask for other requirements before issuing a license.

Most architects who become NCARB-certified only do it once they are well-established as a Licensed Professional Architect in one or more US states. For foreign-educated professionals this is done through the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) Program.

If you received your architectural schooling outside the US, you can get licensed in multiple states by pursuing certification through the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). This is an additional process which can help you meet licensing requirements of more states. As a foreign-educated architect you may be able to get NCARB certification by participating in the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program.

In order to qualify for the NCARB Certification and the Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect Program you must:

- Have graduated with a professional architecture degree from an architecture program which is officially recognized in your home country
- Have worked at least seven years in responsible control and unlimited practice as an architect in the country in which you are credentialed. "Responsible control" means that you have had full authority as an architect on a project and that your independent professional judgment has been involved in all of its technical aspects
- Hold current enrollment or licensure as an architect in a country other than US and Canada which 1) keeps formal records for licensing enforcement and discipline and 2) offers some degree of reciprocal credentialing for US architects
- Have your foreign education evaluated through EESA-NCARB, meeting the high-level NCARB Educational Standard and addressing any deficiencies found

Fees exceed \$7,000 and include services such as evaluation of your foreign degree, creation of an NCARB online Record, compilation of a special experience dossier, and a final interview.

7. IMPORTANT LINKS

REGULATION:

- The [Bureau of Professional Licensing](#) issues licenses for Architects, with links to various forms needed throughout the process
- The [National Council of Architectural Registration Boards](#) (NCARB) is a key organization you will use throughout the licensing process
- The [NCARB Intern Development Program \(IDP\)](#) overview, with a link to [IDP guidelines](#)

FOREIGN DEGREE EVALUATION:

- Your foreign education must be evaluated by the [Education Evaluation Services for Architects of the National Architectural Accrediting Board](#) (EESA-NAAB)

TESTING:

- The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) has [Architect Registration Exam \(ARE\) Guidelines](#) that include an exam overview
- The NCARB also provides [Architect Registration Exam \(ARE\) 4.0 Exam Guides](#) free for download from its site. These include a general practice program, and a study guide and practice program for each of the seven divisions
- The ARE Helpline can also answer your questions about the test at 800/896-2272

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:

- The [American Institute of Architects](#) is the largest professional association for architecture in the US