

News Clips

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ARE 4.0 Series, Issue 2

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For more information:
Contact the Architect Registration
Examination Department
202/783-6500
are@ncarb.org

ARE® 4.0 – Myth Busters

Since the announcement of ARE® 4.0 in March, the Council has received a variety of questions about both the current exam and the new format that will begin in July 2008. The availability of information on the NCARB web site has answered many candidate and Member Board questions. However, we have noticed many candidates have misunderstood some of the information. Below are some of the most common “myths” and questions concerning the new format and the exam in general.

MYTH: *The current ARE is being transitioned to ARE 4.0 to generate more profits for NCARB.*

FACT: The ARE is heavily subsidized by NCARB and the income generated by the administration of the ARE covers only a portion of the expenses related to the development and administration of the examination. The remainder of the expenses is covered by income generated by other programs operated by the Council.

The mission of NCARB is to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the public. ALL decisions related to the examination are guided by this mission.

MYTH: *NCARB is changing the test to make their retake quota.*

FACT: NCARB doesn't have a quota for retakes. Nor does NCARB have a quota that restricts the number of candidates who are allowed to pass the ARE and become architects each year.

MYTH: *NCARB makes random, impulsive changes without careful consideration.*

FACT: Each and every year the exam undergoes a deliberate, studied, and controlled evaluation process that involves close to 100 practicing architects from across the USA and Canada. The evolution to ARE 4.0 has been guided by the 2001 Practice Analysis survey conducted by NCARB that provided a comprehensive analysis of the architecture profession.

In order to stay current, the exam must evolve over time. A stagnant exam does not serve the Member Boards or the profession. Sometimes, the changes involve more than just content. The last major change to the exam structure was more than 10 years ago when it became computerized. The nine division ARE dates back to 1983.

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MYTH: *I can ‘mix and match’ which version of the exam I want to take.*

FACT: If you have passed at least one division of the ARE prior to May 2008, you will be considered a “transition candidate.” As a “transition candidate,” you will be required to continue testing in ARE 3.1 until June 2009. If you aren’t finished by the end of the one-year overlap (July 2008 – June 2009), you will then be transitioned to ARE 4.0.

If you have not passed any division of the ARE prior to May 2008, you will be automatically transitioned to ARE 4.0.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Who makes decisions regarding the development and implementation of the ARE?

The development of the ARE is a lengthy process that involves thousands of hours of work by hundreds of volunteer architects. Several times a year, the various exam committees meet to write questions, evaluate scoring engines, and make recommendations related to the long-term future of the ARE. The NCARB Board of Directors makes the final decision regarding changes to the ARE.

Why weren’t interns and current exam candidates told about ARE 4.0 sooner?

ARE 4.0 was announced approximately 27 months in advance of ARE 3.1 being discontinued. The current NATIONAL AVERAGE to complete all 9 divisions of the ARE is approximately 28 months.

Why doesn’t NCARB produce more comprehensive study materials for the ARE?

NCARB’s goal for the study materials is to provide candidates with a sampling of the types of questions found in the multiple-choice exams and an opportunity for candidates to practice with the software used in the graphic vignettes.

The ARE is a high-stakes licensing examination. You are required to demonstrate your knowledge, skill and ability. The ARE is not a teaching tool. As such, the study materials produced by NCARB serve a different purpose than those provided for college classes or admissions exams.

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About NCARB

NCARB comprises the architectural registration boards of all 50 states as well as those of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. NCARB assists its member state registration boards in carrying out their duties and provides a certification program for individual architects.

The mission of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards is to work together as a council of member boards to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the public and to assist member boards in carrying out their duties. In order to achieve these goals, the Council develops and recommends standards to be required of an applicant for architectural registration; develops and recommends standards regulating the practice of architecture; provides to member boards a process for certifying the qualifications of an architect for registration; and represents the interests of member boards before public and private agencies. With the Committee of Canadian Architectural Councils (CCAC), NCARB has also established guidelines for the reciprocal registration of U.S. and Canadian architects.