Lisa M. Whited, IIDA, ASID, was President of a commercial design firm in Portland, Maine for 14 years, and has served as president of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ). She believes that collaboration between the architectural and interior design professions will strengthen the public perception of good design, and has taken a leadership role in bridging the respective professions. In her ongoing efforts to enhance the credibility and value of professional interior designers, Ms. Whited has created and presented seminars, written articles, and spoken to groups across the country.

Photographer—Abbie Sewall

NCIDQ—for some interior designers these letters spell "dread." For others, it is a challenge they cannot wait to tackle. I believe that the NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualification) must become an experience for designers to embrace rather than reject—it is here to make sure we have the knowledge and experience to call ourselves professional interior designers. The NCIDQ exam is simply the starting point to becoming a professional. The years spent after the exam—working with clients, contractors, architects, and engineers—will refine, shape, and sharpen an interior designer's skills. The NCIDQ acronym means "begin," not "dread!"

Photographer—Maine Audio Visual Services

Maine State House, Senate Chamber, Augusta, ME

Certified Interior Designer: Lisa Whited

Registered Architect: Weinrich & Burt

Contractor: Granger Northern

PART I

An Introduction to the Profession of Interior Design

1. The Profession
Defining a Profession *History of the Profession* *Divisions of the Profession*
Educational Preparation *Professional Associations* *NCIDQ Examination*
Licensing and Title Acts *Continuing Education*

2. Ethics
Ethics in the Business Environment *Professional Conduct* *For Discussion*

3. Personal Goal Setting
Goals *Risks in Goal Setting* *A Personal Mission Statement* *Setting Goals*

Chapter 1

The Profession

Look around you. The room in which you are reading this book was designed by someone. Maybe even you. Interiors are all around us—figuratively as well as literally. We probably spend 90 percent of our day in some sort of interior: where we live, work, shop, eat, seek professional services, and so on. Someone planned that space. And that individual or group of individuals made sure the interior space met building, fire, safety, and accessibility codes. He or she planned that space to meet functional needs of the client and visitors. The individual probably decided what colors, fabrics, materials, and textures would be needed to compliment the furniture items and to create a pleasing environment.

Hopefully, it was done by a professional interior designer. What does the title professional interior designer mean? "People who decorate interiors are interior decorators," believe much of the public. The most commonly quoted definition of an interior designer comes from the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ): "The Professional Interior Designer is qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces. For the purpose of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public."*

Of course, not everyone who has something to do with the planning and design of an interior has received formal education and training and has been certified by examination. That's because interior design as a profession is still evolving and gaining recognition as a profession both in the minds of the people who take up the business of interior design and in the minds of the public. This is, in part, due to the fact that it is a young profession. The use of the term *interior design* did not appear in general usage until after World War II.

The design of interiors plays a crucial part in all our lives. Designing interiors is not only a fun way to make a living but also an awesome responsibility. Part of that responsibility lies in being professional and businesslike about what we do as a professional. A position in interior design is not only an opportunity to be creative and, quite honestly, spend a lot of other peoples' money wisely but also a business. Design firms do not last long if they are not operated and managed in a businesslike manner and do not generate a profit somewhere along the line.

* Excerpted from the short definition of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification. The entire definition can be found in the Appendix.

After you have read this chapter, you will easily see why interior design today is a profession—different from other traditionally thought of professions but a profession nonetheless. Yet, it is still evolving. Chapter 1 begins by defining a profession according to sociologists. It continues with a short history of the profession. Educational standards, which have become increasingly stringent over the years, are important especially for those readers who are just now considering a career in interior design. A brief discussion of the major professional associations will help the reader appreciate the breadth of design specialties within the profession. The chapter also reviews the qualifying examination that has been established as the benchmark for licensing and for professional-level association membership, which provides evidence of competence. The chapter examines licensing and title registration issues, as well as continuing education. A discussion of ethics, which previously was included in this chapter, follows as its own chapter.

It must be noted that each of these topics in itself could constitute a book. However, the purpose here is to introduce these topics briefly as a reference about the growth and changes of the interior design profession itself.

Defining a Profession

This text discusses the issues associated with the operation and management of a professional interior design practice. To discuss the broad range of topics involved in the professional practice of interior design without discussing the profession itself would do it an injustice. So we begin this discussion by presenting information on how interior design meets the criteria of a profession based on the definition of "profession," as expressed by sociologists.

A profession is defined by sociologists as existing when a specific set of characteristics can be associated with it. According to Nicholas Abercrombie, they are as follows:

1. The use of skills based on theoretical knowledge
2. Education and training in these skills
3. The competence of professionals ensured by examinations
4. A code of conduct to ensure professional integrity
5. Performance of a service that is for the public good
6. A professional association that organizes members*

Gordon Marshall (1998, p. 527) writes: "A profession includes some central regulatory body to ensure the standard of performance of individual members; a code of conduct; careful management of knowledge in relation to the expertise which constitutes the basis of the profession's activities; and lastly, control of number, selection, and training of new entrants."

The profession of interior design, as we know it today, is guided by all of the points noted by both of these authors. But the profession itself, and the professionals associated with it, did not evolve overnight; and, of course, it is still evolving.

A professional does not emerge merely as a consequence of learning the technical principles needed in the profession. To become a professional also

* *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, by Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill, and Bryan S. Turner (Penguin Books, 1994), copyright © Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill, and Bryan S. Turner, 1994, 335. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

requires an attitude of dedicated commitment to the work one does and to the advancement of the profession. In addition, he or she must have some understanding of the history of the profession and the issues that are important to maintaining the vitality of the profession. Understanding what it takes to organize and maintain an interior design practice follows understanding the roots and contemporary concerns of the profession. Being a professional also involves keeping oneself informed about the latest advances in the design specialty in which one chooses to work. It also means learning to have a professional attitude in one's dealings with others in the industry and operating (or working in) a design firm as a knowledgeable business person.

History of the Profession

In some ways, it can be argued that the work of today's interior designer dates from the earliest times, although it was not called interior design until nearly the mid-twentieth century. The ancient Greeks were some of the first civilizations to put on theatrical performances in specialized spaces, referred to as theaters. Monasteries provided some of the earliest settings for healthcare facilities and were among the most important early school settings. Of course, religious facilities have always existed in one form or another. The hospitality industry dates back many, many centuries as well, beginning with taverns and inns that sheltered travelers. Perhaps you recall seeing the market stalls of the seventeenth century—the forerunners of today's malls—in recent, popular movies. During the Renaissance, the aristocracy began collecting antiquities and displaying them, creating, in effect, early museums. And, of course, homes have progressed from caves and dugouts to a variety of residential spaces, as can be seen throughout the world today. The "interior design" of all these different types of early architecture and consequent interiors came into being out of necessity at first. Interior design evolved as technology, and skills, and education improved.

Before the twentieth century, interior decoration was the responsibility of architects and artisans, such as the Michelangelo, the Adam brothers, Antonio Gaudi, and William Morris. No matter what their "profession" was in the arts, they clearly served as interior decorators. These architects, painters, sculptors, and other artisans were considered artists or craftsmen. Those who designed and produced the fabrics, carpets, and furniture items were considered shopkeepers. Called *ensembliers* or *ateliers* in Europe, the shopkeepers and shops did not deal with interior decoration as a profession but, rather, they were suppliers.

Elsie deWolfe (1865–1950) was among the first individuals who brought the concept of professionalism to interior decoration. It was approximately during her career that the term *interior decoration* began to be used in relation to the work of individuals such as herself. Born in New York City and a member of the upper class, deWolfe began her career as a professional interior decorator in 1904, when she was 39 years old. Her first commission, in 1905, was for the design of the Colony Club in New York City. Her use of white and pastels was a decided change from the dark colors that were popular in the Victorian period. Among deWolfe's clients were such notable figures as Henry C. Frick and Anne Pierpont Morgan. Because these early decorators often had wealthy clientele, the term *society decorator* was often associated with them. DeWolfe also wrote one of the earliest books about interior decoration, *The House in Good Taste* (1913), in which she related her philosophy of decoration for homes. She

also is credited with being responsible for another milestone in the profession, when she received a fee for her design services rather than a commission on the sale of furniture (Cambell and Seebohm, 1992, p. 70).

DeWolfe's success inspired other women to enter the profession. It was, after all, one of the few acceptable professions for women at the turn of the century. Formal training, however, was difficult for them to obtain. It was not until 1904 that courses in interior decoration became available. The New York School of Applied and Fine Arts (now known as Parsons School of Design) in New York City was one of the first to offer such courses. Those who could not afford such courses or were unable to avail themselves of formal courses, would learn from magazines of the time, such as *House Beautiful* or *House and Garden*.

After World War I, postwar prosperity became more widespread, allowing an increased interest in, and employment of, the interior decoration professional. Department stores, with their displays of home furnishings, flourished as women had more time to shop. Furniture manufacturing centers grew in places such as Grand Rapids, Michigan, and High Point, North Carolina. At first, most of these manufacturers produced inexpensive imitations of period pieces that were popular in the United States at that time. By the 1920s, furniture manufacturers were producing finer-quality furniture. However, the society decorators were still traveling to Europe to purchase antiques.

In the 1920s, the Art Deco style had an important impact on the interior design of houses and offices. Department stores such as Macy's, Wanamaker's, and Marshall Fields constructed vignettes* to display the new style. These efforts did much to popularize the Art Deco style in the United States. Art Deco also revolutionized the interior and exterior design of office buildings and other commercial structures. At that time, most interior design in commercial structures was done by men. Dorothy Draper (1889–1969) is credited with being the first woman interior decorator who specialized in commercial interiors (Tate and Smith, 1986, p. 322). During that time, other educational programs of interior decoration were being established in New York and other cities in the United States.

By the late 1920s, many local Decorators' Clubs had been started in various parts of the country. Design education strengthened as an increasing number of formal college courses and programs in interior decoration became available. The profession was becoming more formalized and began to change its image from that of the untrained decorator to that of the trained professional.

Grand Rapids, Michigan, bears mention, as it was the site of one of the earliest and largest to-the-trade-only semiannual furniture markets. The Grand Rapids Furniture Exposition, as it was officially called, was first held in December 1878 (Carron, 1998, p. 72). The market was held in January and June for 87 years. Local manufacturers displayed their products, educational programs were held, and manufacturers from other locations rented storefronts to show their goods.

The economic depression of the 1930s was having a profound effect on the furniture industry—much of it centered in Grand Rapids at the time. The Great Depression had a disastrous effect on the ability of the middle class to purchase furniture produced in the United States and Europe. Many furniture manufacturing centers were on the brink of closing. The leading society decorators remained relatively unaffected by the depression, since their wealthy

* *Vignette*, as used in the interior design profession, means a display of furniture and furnishings that simulates an actual room.

clients could still purchase goods. However, most of these decorators were still purchasing goods from Europe rather than using American-made goods.

The leaders of the Grand Rapids manufacturing center conceived of an idea that would bring the decorators to Grand Rapids, they would hold a larger furniture market than they had ever held before. With William R. Moore of Chicago, they put together a conference to organize a national professional organization. The conference was held during July 1931, in Grand Rapids, and speakers such as Frank Lloyd Wright were scheduled to appear in order to entice decorators to the conference. The manufacturers provided the money—and furnishings—for the decorators so that they could design model rooms displays. And, of course, the decorators were invited to the various manufacturing plants and showrooms to see the furniture firsthand.

By the end of the conference, the American Institute of Interior Decorators (AIID) had been founded, with William R. Moore as its first national president. In 1936, the organization moved its headquarters from Chicago to New York City and changed its name to the American Institute of Decorators (AID). The early organization established membership requirements based on education and work experience. Over the years, these requirements changed and became more stringent. However, for many years, there was no formal testing for competency.

From the 1930s on, the modernism of the Bauhaus school had a great effect on the design of buildings and interiors in the United States. The industrialism of post-World War II also led to new manufacturing techniques that changed furniture and design styles. For example, molded plywood and molded fiberglass designs, such as those by Charles Eames, revolutionized seating design. After World War II, nonresidential design became an increasingly important aspect of the profession. Florence Knoll established the Knoll Planning Group in the 1940s. This design company's focus was on commercial interior design (Russell, 1992, p. 11). The evolution of giant corporations was one factor. Curtain wall construction, suspended ceilings, and changes in construction to allow for vast, open interior spaces in office buildings all impacted architecture and interior design and the role of the decorator/designer. In the 1940s and 1950s, more stringent educational opportunities meant that the decorators of the post-World War II era would have to rely on educational preparation rather than on just having "good taste" in order to obtain jobs and commissions.

The furniture and furnishings industry, inexorably tied to the interior design profession, forced further changes in the profession. Trade shows, first held at manufacturing centers like Grand Rapids and later, at metropolitan market centers like the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, became a popular way for manufacturers to present their new products to decorators, designers, and other tradespeople.

Changes in the philosophy of the workplace created new furniture concepts, such as that of the office landscape. Office landscape was first introduced in Germany in the early 1950s by the Quickborner Team für Planung und Organisation, often referred to as the Quickborner Team. Office landscape, as practiced in Germany, produced offices that were laid out without walls, utilizing plants, bookcases, and file cabinets as "screens" while creating wide-open floor plans. As companies embraced this planning philosophy, new specialists in space planning, lighting design, acoustics, and so forth, became part of the profession. These new design concepts and other issues created tension and arguments over admission and educational requirements for interior designers. A debate even ensued over the words *decorator* versus *designer*.

In 1957, a group belonging to the New York branch of AID broke off and formed the National Society for Interior Designers (NSID). For many years,

deep-seated disagreements over qualifications, testing, and terminology continued between the two organizations. In 1961, the American Institute of Decorators became the American Institute of Interior Designers (AID). Finally, in 1975, the American Institute of Interior Designers and the National Society for Interior Designers overcame their differences and merged into one national organization, the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). Today, there are over 30,000 members of ASID.

All through the 1960s, there existed discussions regarding educational training and testing procedures for qualification. NSID likewise favored licensing to restrict practicing to qualified professionals. According to Olga Gueft, the Southern California chapter of AID was fighting for licensing as early as 1951, whereas some chapters of NSID were lobbying for licensing in the 1960s. AID favored creation of a qualifying examination. An examination was devised, and in the 1960s and early 1970s, prospective members of AID had to pass the examination for membership. Because of philosophical differences, NSID designed and utilized its own qualifying exam. In 1974, the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) was formed to develop an examination that both organizations could use.

As interest in the profession grew, the numbers of programs in colleges, universities, and professional schools increased, as did the number of faculty involved in education. Since most of these educators considered teaching as their full-time occupation, many limited their practice of interior design. Needing an organization to keep abreast of the profession as well as of advances in educational goals, they formed the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC) in 1963 (IDEC web site, 2000). Today, IDEC publishes the only scholarly journal of the profession, the *Journal of Interior Design Education and Research*.

As concerns about educational programs evolved, AID, NSID, and IDEC worked together to encourage the creation of the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER) in 1970 in order to deal with the accreditation of educational programs. Today, FIDER is the agency charged with evaluating interior design education programs and determining which ones meet the standards established for formal accreditation. This organization yearly publishes a list of the schools that provide accredited undergraduate interior design programs in the United States.

In the late 1960s, a new professional organization, the Institute of Business Designers (IBD) was incorporated to meet the needs of the commercial/contract designer. IBD was conceived in 1963 by members of the National Office Furnishings Association (NOFA), who were concerned about the importance of interior design service in office furnishings dealerships. Later, in 1963, NOFA-d (NOFA designers) was formed as a branch of NOFA. Membership was open to interior designers who were working for office furnishings dealers, although membership was basically limited to those designers who were working in Chicago and New York City. In 1967, NOFA was renamed NOPA (the National Office Products Association) after it merged with stationery and office supply dealers. Meetings began at this time concerning the status of NOPA-d. After discussions and a pledge of assistance from NOPA, NOPA-d became an independent organization in 1969 and was renamed the Institute of Business Designers (IBD). Charles Gelber was elected the first president in 1970. Along with the incorporation of IBD in 1969, that year saw the first Neocon (National Exposition of Contract Furnishings) market in Chicago. Today, Neocon Chicago is the largest contract furniture exposition in the country and is attended by thousands of interior designers, architects, planners, and end users.

Many special-interest professional associations, such as the International Society of Interior Designers (ISID) and the Institute of Store Planners (ISP),

were established during the 1970s and 1980s. Those designers who work in specialized areas, such as for the federal government, store planning, or retail furniture and furnishings merchandising, facility planning, and lighting design, often have found it to be advantageous to join a specialized association. Several of these professional associations are discussed in a later section of this chapter.

A proliferation of new pressures and responsibilities began to be imposed on the interior design profession in the 1970s. After several tragic fires occurred in public buildings, stringent fire codes were passed to make commercial facilities safer. Today, interior designers must deal with many fire safety issues in the design of commercial interiors. The energy crisis and the increased cost of electricity have forced designers and suppliers to find new ways to provide satisfactory lighting at low cost. Rapid increases in the size of many businesses, as well as the energy crisis, have created a need for new, space-efficient furniture products and space-planning solutions. The mid- to late 1970s saw an explosion of products for open office design. These new products created many new design challenges and opportunities for interior designers. Although legislation for interior designers had been an issue for many decades, a renewed effort to formalize legislative efforts began around the mid-1970s. Efforts to license individuals working as interior designers finally became a reality in the 1980s. In 1982, Alabama passed the first legislation for title registration of interior design. The passage in 1992 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provided yet another challenge to licensed professionals working in the United States. Canadian designers and designers around the world have had to learn to design with similar regulations. Designers and manufacturers, who increasingly have been concerned with interior environmental and health factors, began the "greening" of interiors. Environmentally safe or protected products were specified over products designed and manufactured from unhealthy or endangered natural materials.

Those designers who were members of IBD are now members of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA). IIDA was created in 1994 as a result of the discussions by the member organizations of the Unification Task Force. Representatives from ASID, IBD, ISID, ISP, Interior Designers of Canada (IDC), and IDEC formed the task force and began meeting in 1989 to discuss the creating of one umbrella organization that could address the needs of all aspects of the interior design profession. With NCIDQ, FIDER, and the Council for Federal Interior Designers (CFID), the Unification Task Force worked to develop a unified professional association. In early 1993, the president of the IDC reported that it would withdraw from the unified voice discussions. Although it strongly supported the unification concept and process, the IDC board felt that it would be in the best interests of IDC to withdraw from the talks. In addition, the ASID board voted to withdraw from the unification discussions in September 1993. According to a press release from ASID, the board voted against continuing discussions based on a membership response that was not in favor of unification (ASID, 1993). During the early part of 1994, members of the remaining organizations debated unification. In the end, members of IDEC and ISP decided to remain separate from the new group under discussion. Members of IBD, ISID, and CFID approved the merger, and formed the International Interior Design Association (IIDA).

The word *explosion* barely describes the emergence of the personal computer in the office and in most commercial interiors in recent decades. Personal computers on every desk in large- and small-sized businesses have created a new challenge for interior designers. While the computer has helped small

and big business alike, it also has brought new problems for the designer—glare from overhead lighting, carpel tunnel syndrome from improperly placed equipment and incorrect seating specifications, and a recognition of health problems that are caused by poorly designed or specified seating.

Technology has also offered designers the opportunity to integrate computer-aided design and drafting (CAD) into their practices. Since the mid-1990s, the Internet has changed the way in which designers work, as rapid communication via E-mail has facilitated the transfer of information and graphics between designers and their clients on the World Wide Web.

And let us not forget that, while all these challenges were having a dramatic impact on commercial interior designers, those who chose to work in residential design were also seeing changes in their professional area. The changing makeup of the family has required renewed considerations about how the family and its members use their home environment. Issues of the "green" environment have become even more important in homes, as the various volatile odors and gases released by the increasing numbers of products that are being made from hydrocarbons have affected the lives of residential clients. Design styles, color trends, new product development, and bigger interior spaces also have challenged the residential designer.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, one of the biggest challenges to the residential interior designer will be to find appropriate ways to design and remodel homes for an aging population. With huge numbers of baby boomers (those born between 1945 and 1964) fast approaching their "senior years," homes and assisted-living facilities are needed to satisfy their changing lifestyles.

This section by no means attempts to be a definitive history of the interior design profession. The author leaves that task to other capable authors. Rather, this overview of the history of the profession and of the influences on its growth is meant to give readers an appreciation of the roots of the profession called *interior design.* Figure 1-1 summarizes its chronological development.

Interior design has seen many changes in its brief history and will continue to see changes as efforts such as licensing and certification increase and as outside influences continue to affect professional practice. In an earlier 1931 statement, AIID prepared the following definition of a decorator: "A decorator is one who, by training and experience, is qualified to plan, design, and execute interiors and their furnishings and to supervise the various arts and crafts essential to their completion" (Gueft, 1980, p. 8).* The reader is invited to compare this definition with the one quoted in the introduction to this chapter.

The major professional associations in the United States and Canada endorse the definition of a professional interior designer prepared by NCIDQ. That definition also has been endorsed by the International Federation of Interior Architects/Interior Designers (IFI), by FIDER, and by those states in the United States and provinces in Canada with licensing or certification statues. It has been reproduced in its entirety in the Appendix.

Today, the profession thrives during one of the greatest economic booms in decades. But it has been a long time in coming. Interior design professionals and students are faced with continuing changes in the profession. As members work on projects while being restricted by legal constraints, licensing issues, educational and qualification concerns, public opinion, and better business practice, the profession will continue to grow and evolve.

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1878	First of its kind semiannual furniture market. Held in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
1904	First real use of term "interior decoration."
	First courses in interior decoration offered at the New York School of Applied and Fine Arts.
1905	Elsie deWolfe obtains her first commission as an interior decorator. She is credited as being first interior decorator.
1913	Elsie deWolfe publishes first true book on interior decoration, *The House in Good Taste*.
1920s	Greater effort by department stores to market home furnishings.
	Manufacturing centers of home furnishings begin to develop.
	Art Deco period creates greater interest in interior decoration of homes and offices.
	Dorothy Draper credited as being the first woman interior decorator to specialize in commercial interiors.
	Decorator clubs begin forming in larger cities.
	Design education strengthened in many parts of the country.
1931	Grand Rapids furniture show. Meeting to create a national professional organization.
	In July, American Institute of Interior Decorators (AIID) is founded.
	William R. Moore elected first national president of AIID.
1936	AIID's name changed to American Institute of Decorators (AID).
1940s	Post-World War II industrialism encourages new technologies in furniture manufacturing.
	Industrialism produces increased need for, and importance of, nonresidential interior design.
1950s	Development of open landscape planning concept in Germany by Quickborner Team.
1951	First time a state considers legislation to license interior design.
1957	National Society for Interior Designers (NSID) founded from a splinter group of the New York AID chapter.
1961	AID changes its name to American Institute of Interior Designers (AID).
1963	National Office Furnishings Association (NOFA) creates NOFA-d (NOFA-designers), a professional group for interior designers who work for office furnishings dealers.
	Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC) founded to advance the needs of educators of interior design.
1967	NOFA and NOFA-d change names to NOPA and NOPA-d, respectively, when NOFA merges with stationery and supplies dealers to form National Office Products Association.
1968	Introduction of "Action Office," designed by Robert Probst for Herman Miller, Inc. First true open-office furniture product.
1969	Institute of Business Designers (IBD) incorporated. NOPA-d is parent organization.
1970	Charles Gelber elected first national President of IBD.
	Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER) founded. Is responsible for reviewing and accrediting undergraduate and graduate interior design programs.
1974	National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) incorporated. Charged with the development and administration of a common qualification examination.
1975	American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) formed from the merger of AID and NSID. Norman De Haan is first national ASID president.
1982	Alabama becomes first state with title registration legislation for interior design.
1988	First major discussion of 1995 Hypotheses, the document that begins a discussion of unification of interior design professional associations.
1992	Passage of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which provides accessibility standards for all public buildings.
1994	Unification of IBD, ISID, and CFID to form International Interior Design Association (IIDA).

FIGURE 1-1. Chronology

Divisions of the Profession

An in-depth discussion of the divisions of the profession and the many career choices within it is presented in Chapter 32. At this time, it would be beneficial to point out that many consider that there are two universally accepted divisions of the profession: residential interior design and commercial interior design.

Residential interior design is concerned with the planning and/or specifying of interior materials and products used in private residences. A private residence can be a freestanding home, a condominium, a townhouse, a mobile home, or an apartment.

Commercial interior design, sometimes called contract interior design because of the use of a contract for services, is concerned with the planning and specifying of interior materials and products used in public and private spaces, such as offices, stores, hotels, restaurants, schools, airports, hospitals, and so on.

Educational Preparation

The development of formal educational preparation in interior design began approximately in 1904 when what is now the Parsons School of Design began offering a specific program. Informal preparation in this career came from a few courses that were offered in art or home economics. Of course, architecture programs were in existence prior to the beginning of the twentieth century, but these offered few classes in interior decorating, as it was called then. Throughout the twentieth century, educational programs developed all across the country. Curriculums varied for many years, resulting in uneven preparation. As we read in the section on the history of the profession, the beginnings of some type of educational standards began as the numbers of decorators grew and the industry blossomed after World War II.

The traditional roots of interior design education are in the fine arts, home economics (referred to as human ecology today), and architecture. Current interior design programs at universities, colleges, community colleges, and professional schools generally assign interior design academic programs within one of these three areas, although they may be found in other departments or divisions as well. In addition, interior design programs are interdisciplinary, drawing from these three academic areas as well as from the supporting areas of business and the liberal arts. Depending on the location of the program, the professional and technical course work will have a slightly different focus.

Programs range from two years to as long as seven years. Two-year programs are primarily offered in community colleges and some professional schools. In many situations, students begin at one of these two-year programs and transfer into a four-year (or longer) program in order to obtain a bachelor's degree. Other students are satisfied with a two-year associate degree in interior design and move on to employment. Most of these graduates work in small interior design studios or retail stores. Graduates of four-year (or more) programs generally accept initial employment with larger-sized interior design firms or architectural firms.

Voluntary accreditation of interior design programs was not available until the creation of the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER), which was established in 1970. FIDER, a nonprofit organization recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation, is considered the

reliable authority on the quality of postsecondary interior design education in North America.

The mission of FIDER is expressed by its mission statement: "FIDER leads the interior design profession to excellence by setting standards and accrediting academic programs" (FIDER web site, 2000). With the organization of FIDER, educational standards were developed to evaluate an interior design program prior to granting accreditation. These standards are reviewed from time to time; this was last undertaken in late 1999. An abbreviated statement of the standards is presented in Figure 1-2. The reader may wish to contact FIDER for a complete report.

Research studies in the 1980s revealed distinct differences in educational programs throughout the United States and Canada. The length of the programs varied from two years to as much as seven years. The number of credit hours of interior design classes varied considerably as well. With the research study information, FIDER, with assistance from NCIDQ and additional ongoing research, has defined a common body of knowledge and skills that are needed by competent professional interior designers. The common body of knowledge, according to FIDER, is shown in Figure 1-3.

1. **Curriculum Structure**
   The curriculum is structured to facilitate and advance student learning.
2. **Design Fundamentals**
   Students have a foundation in the fundamentals of art and design, theories of design and human behavior, and discipline-related history.
3. **Interior Design**
   Students understand and apply the knowledge, skills, processes, and theories of interior design.
4. **Communication**
   Students communicate effectively.
5. **Building Systems and Interior Materials**
   Students design within the context of building systems. Students use appropriate materials and products.
6. **Regulations**
   Students apply the laws, codes, regulations, standards, and practices that protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.
7. **Business and Professional Practice**
   Students have a foundation in business and professional practice.
8. **Professional Values**
   The program leads students to develop the attitudes, traits, and values of professional responsibility, accountability, and effectiveness.
9. **Faculty**
   Faculty members and other instructional personnel are qualified and adequate in number to implement program objectives.
10. **Facilities**
    Program facilities and resources provide an environment to stimulate thought, motivate students, and promote the exchange of ideas.
11. **Administration**
    The administration of the program is clearly defined, provides appropriate program leadership, and supports the program. The program demonstrates accountability to the public through its published documents.
12. **Assessment**
    Systematic and comprehensive assessment methods contribute to the program's ongoing development and improvement.

FIGURE 1-2. FIDER Professional Standards 2000

Each interior designer may have unique qualities and possess highly specialized abilities in certain areas but will, in common, hold knowledge of:

- The basic elements of design and composition that form the foundation for creative design, and an awareness of the various media in the visual arts that assist in the understanding of the universality of these fundamentals;
- Theories of design, color, proxemics, behavior, visual perception, and spatial composition which lead to an understanding of the interrelationship between beings and the built environment;
- The design process, i.e., programming, conceptualization, problem solving, and evaluation, firmly grounded on a base of anthropometrics, ergonomics, and other human factors;
- Space planning, furniture planning and selection, developed in relationship to application to projects, including all types of habitation, whether for work or leisure, new or old; for a variety of populations, young and old, disabled, low or high income;
- Design attributes of materials, lighting, furniture, textiles, color, etc., viewed in conjunction with physical, sociological, and psychological factors to reflect concern for the aesthetic qualities of the various parts of the built environment;
- The technical aspects of structure and construction, building systems, i.e., HVAC, lighting, electrical, plumbing, and acoustics, sufficient to enable discourse and cooperation with related disciplines;
- Technical aspects of surface and structural materials, soft goods, textiles and detailing of furniture, cabinetry, and interiors;
- The application of laws, building codes, regulations, and standards that affect design solutions in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public;
- Communication skills, oral, written, and visual for the presentation of design concepts, the production of working drawings, and the conduct of business;
- The history and organization of the profession; the methods and practices of the business of interior design; and an appreciation of a code of ethics;
- Styles of architecture, furniture, textiles, art, and accessories in relation to the economic, social, and religious influences on previous cultures;
- Methods necessary to conduct research and analyze the data in order to develop design concepts and solutions on a sound basis.

FIGURE 1-3. The FIDER common body of knowledge in interior design, developed collaboratively by professional associations (Reprinted with permission, Foundation for Interior Design Education Research)

Currently, FIDER accredits a single program of interior design education, the professional level. The program most commonly results in a bachelor's degree, although three-year programs also exist. The professional degree level of preparation must contain a minimum of 30 hours of liberal arts, sciences, and humanities courses. What is included in the total number of credit hours and their emphasis is up to the institution granting the degree. These programs provide curriculum preparation for professional-level interior designers and are also the common preparation for those seeking a master's degree in interior design. Effective during the fall of 2000, FIDER no longer accredits two-year programs, unless the program requires a minimum of 30 semester credit hours of liberal arts and science, in addition to the interior design curriculum (FIDER Professional Standards, 2000).

The master's degree level of preparation is for those designers who are seeking advanced studies or research work in interior design. Master's degree work commonly requires a minimum of 30 semester credit hours, with actual degree requirements being left up to the institution. A graduate student's work culminates in a graphic or written thesis, depending on his or her academic focus and the requirements of the institution. FIDER does not accredit master's degree or other postprofessional programs any longer.

Each interior design academic program has a different emphasis because of the mission of the institution and department, and the focus of the faculty. FIDER-accredited programs indicate to the student that the program meets the educational standards that are accepted and supported by the profession of interior design. Many other programs exist that are not FIDER accredited. It is up to the individual student and his or her family to investigate carefully the academic programs of all the institutions (accredited or not) in which the student has an interest. Prospective students should talk to academic advisors, alumni of the program, and any design businesses in the area that may have knowledge of the preparation given at a particular school. Students should understand the differences in focus of a program in fine arts versus one in architecture or human ecology. Professional, educational training in interior design must provide the student with the theory and skills of the profession as well as with the general education that is required in the twenty-first century. The focus of that training must also meet the interests, abilities, and career goals of the student.

Professional Associations

An important part of being a professional is to become an active member of a professional association. Interior design professional associations provide members with many tangible and intangible benefits. Some feel that the greatest tangible benefit of professional association membership is the privilege to place ASID, IIDA, IDC or other association appellations after a member's name. It is not the primary benefit; it is only one benefit. A list of other intangible benefits are:

- *Pride in accomplishment*. It is important to have a sense of pride in having achieved the educational, experience, and testing milestones that indicate that one has achieved the highest level in one's profession.
- *Recognition*. Consumers and allied professionals recognize the dedication and credentials of the interior designer who is affiliated with professional associations. To many others, peer recognition as a member of an association is gratifying.
- *Interaction with colleagues in design.* Interior design is both a large and a small profession. There are thousands of individuals who are affiliated with associations, and yet the profession is small enough so that many professionals meet and become friends with colleagues across the country—or across the globe.
- *Educational opportunities*. It is vital in this age of technology and regulations that designers continually update their skills and knowledge in their field. Professional associations help in many ways to provide opportunities for continual educational upgrading through chapter meetings, newsletters, seminars, workshops, national conferences, research studies, and lively discussions of issues and concerns.
- *Important friendships.* Professional colleagues are competitors at times, but many consider each other as friends as well. Through an association, designers get to know their competitors, not only as great designers or good business people, but also simply as people. Designers are proud of the professional and personal friendships that they have made through association activities.

These are just some of the intangible benefits of membership. The reader may think of others that are just as important.

Professional associations also provide tangible benefits for members. Some of these have already been mentioned—chapter meetings, educational updating, and national conference activities. There are many others, among which are the following:

- *Association leadership*. Membership offers an opportunity to be involved in the growth of the profession through positions as chapter and national officers.
- *Leadership training*. Association chapter and national board members and officers receive training to assist them in accomplishing their association responsibilities. Much of this training can be directly applied to an individual's work experience as well.
- *Mailings*. Associations provide mailings to members that keep them informed of the associations' activities as well as of external influences on the profession. Mailings might take the form of member magazines, supplemental newsletters and news bulletins, chapter newsletters, and conference reports.
- *Practice aids*. A number of associations provide sample contracts, business forms, marketing tools, reference books, and other useful aids for members to use in their practice in order to become better professionals.
- *Government affairs*. The associations maintain contact with federal, state, and/or provincial government agencies that may have an effect on the right to practice. Members are kept informed of any pending legislation that might affect design practice.
- *Group insurance*. It is possible for members to take advantage of low group insurance rates for a variety of personal and business insurance needs.
- *Business services*. Discounts and special pricing are available from some associations for car rentals, telephone service, express shipping, credit cards, and other similar business services.
- *Design competitions*. Professional prestige can be achieve through juried national competitions for projects, research, and writing.
- *Industry liaison*. Members receive technical information from industry suppliers.
- *World Wide Web*. Members may obtain information from association national offices, be informed of association business and issues affecting the members, and even carry on on-line chats with the national office or, with other members. Chapters may also offer marketing programs in which a member may link his or her web site to the chapter's web site.

Many other tangible benefits might be thought of by the reader.

There is no lack of reasons for becoming affiliated with an association that is appropriate to the interior designer's interests and needs. The remainder of this section briefly describes the major professional associations. The reader will want to contact the national or provincial offices (listed in the Appendix) for membership applications or for more specific details about the association.

American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)

The largest of the interior design professional associations, with over 30,000 members, is ASID. Its members are engaged in both residential and commercial interior design. An ongoing mission of ASID is to "satisfy the needs of the Society's customers through professional education, knowledge sharing and expansion of the interior design practice and market" (ASID, 1999). In the year 2000, "ASID's mission is to be the definitive resource for professional education and knowledge sharing, advocacy of interior designers' right-to-practice, and

expansion of interior design markets" (ASID Membership information, 1999). ASID provides many membership benefits, including chapter meetings and activities at the local level, a national conference that offers numerous continuing education classes and seminars, on-line and World Wide Web interface, a membership magazine called *ASID ICON*, legislative support for states that are seeking licensing, and many other programs, documents, and activities for the support of the association, its members, and the profession. The members-only link to the association's web site provides specialized information for ASID members on a continually updated basis.

The five membership categories that ASID offers (as of January 2000) are (1) professional, (2) allied, (3) industry partner, (4) retail partner, and (5) student. The highest level of membership is *professional*. Members in this category have satisfied rigorous standards of education, work experience, and testing in order to qualify as professional-level members. The minimum requirements for professional-level membership are: (1) graduation from a recognized college, university, or design school with a major in interior design or a related field,* (2) successful completion of the NCIDQ examination, and (3) a minimum of two years of full-time employment in interior design. A combination of six years of interior design education and work experience is the minimum requirement for qualifing for the NCIDQ examination. Therefore, individuals who have completed at least two years of interior design postsecondary studies and have four years of work experience or another combination of specified education and work experience may also qualify. Individuals who have had no formal accredited educational preparation in interior design or a related field might not qualify for professional-level membership in ASID, since they will not have met NCIDQ's qualification standards. The educational program must include a minimum of 45 semester credit hours or 67 quarter hours in interior design related courses at a school that is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency. Only professional-level members may vote in association elections and may use the appellation *ASID* after their names and in advertising.

The second level of membership is *allied*. Allied Practitioner members are practicing interior designers. Educators who are teaching or working as full-time administrators in postsecondary programs of interior design may obtain Allied Membership (Education). Allied practitioner members must meet the same general membership requirements as for professional membership but have not as yet satisfactorily completed the NCIDQ exam. An allied practitioner member may have a four- or five-year interior design or architecture degree, a two- or three-year certificate in interior design, or a minimum of six years of full-time work in interior design. Allied practitioner members are able to use the appellation *Allied Member, ASID* after their names.

Students who are enrolled in interior design programs may become *student* members of an ASID chapter at their school, if the school has one, or *student corresponding* members, if their institution does not have an ASID student chapter. Students receive mailings from the national office and have the opportunity to participate in the local professional chapter. Students who are in good standing through graduation may apply for allied membership immediately upon graduation. Student members may use the membership appellation *Student Member, ASID*.

Industry Partner (IP) members are those who work for suppliers to the interior design industry. For the most part, these members are wholesalers and suppliers. Many representatives of the manufacturers and suppliers, trade

* NCIDQ requires a minimum of two years of educational preparation in order to take the examination. See the discussion on NCIDQ later in this chapter.

showrooms, and market centers become IP members in order to interact with the membership. Industry partner members also have generously provided financial backing to the profession through sponsorship of continuing education classes, chapter activities, and design competitions.

Retail Partner members are those retail businesses that supply goods and services to consumers. A key difference between the industry partner member and retail partner member is that the retail partner member sells directly to the end user and must have a least one ASID professional or allied practitioner member on his or her staff.

Affiliate Membership is a category for individuals who do not participate in interior design, and it is usually held by members of the press, government agencies, nondesign employees of design firms, and other nonpracticing design-related individuals.

International Interior Design Association (IIDA)

The IIDA represents interior designers who specialize in all areas of commercial and residential interior design. Many of its over 10,000 members were formally part of IBD, ISID, and CFID. The mission of the International Interior Design Association is as follows: "IIDA is a professional networking and educational association committed to enhancing the quality of life through excellence in interior design and advancing interior design through knowledge" (IIDA, 1999). IIDA provides many membership benefits, including local chapter meetings and activities, a national conference, a national news magazine called *perspective*, educational programs, industry liaison, design competitions, and many other programs and activities. It has a very strong commitment to the concept of the "virtual association." The IIDA web site provides a communication avenue to and from its national office to members around the world. The members-only section of the web site provides specialized information for IIDA members.

There are five membership categories in IIDA: (1) professional, (2) associate, (3) affiliate, (4) student, and (5) industry representatives. Professional and associate members may choose to designate a specialty forum as part of their membership. Specialty forums provide in-depth information related to specific interests in the interior design industry. There are eight forums: corporate, residential, healthcare, hospitality, retail, facility planning and design, government, and education and research.

Professional membership is the highest category of membership in IIDA. It is reserved for those members whose work experience, educational background, and successful completion of the NCIDQ examination permits them to apply for this membership category. To obtain professional membership level, the member must meet one of these standards: (1) the educational and experience requirements of the NCIDQ in order to take the examination or (2) proof of satisfactory completion of the NCIDQ examination or the National Council for Architectural Registration Board (NCARB) examination and six years of experience in interior design for architects. Only professional members who hold voting privileges may use the appellation *IIDA* after their names. IIDA also requires that professional members complete 1.0 continuing education units (CEUs), or ten hours, every two years. CEUs will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The second level of membership in IIDA is called *associate* membership. Associate members are actively engaged in the profession of interior design or design education, similarly to allied members of ASID. Associate members meet the same educational requirements of professional members but have not completed the NCIDQ examination. Associate members are also required to complete 1.0 CEUs every two years. These members may use the appellation *Associate IIDA* after their names for marketing purposes.

The third membership category is called *affiliate* membership. These members are individuals who are involving in an area related to interior design, such as graphic design, lighting design, or landscape architecture, but do not qualify for professional membership.

Student memberships at a national level are available to students who are enrolled in a recognized design school or college program. Student members of IIDA frequently become members of the local chapter in addition to the national student organization. Students who maintain their student membership in good standing through graduation may apply for allied membership immediately upon graduation.

Industry members are individuals who are interested and supportive of interior design but who are not practicing designers. These members include manufacturers, individual representatives, design centers, and schools.

Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC)

The IDEC is a professional association whose members are individuals who are actively engaged in teaching interior design. Many IDEC members are also professional or educator members of ASID, IIDA, and other associations. IDEC is "dedicated to the advancement of education and research in interior design. IDEC fosters exchange of information, improvement of educational standards, and development of the body of knowledge relative to the quality of life and human performance in the interior environment. IDEC concentrates on the establishment and strengthening of lines of communication among individual educators, practitioners, educational institutions, and organizations concerned with interior design education" (IDEC, 1999). IDEC provides many member benefits, including an annual conference and regional meetings, where speakers, seminars, and workshops are provided for the presentation of research and for the exchange of ideas; publication of the *Journal of Interior Design Education and Research*, a refereed journal, as well as the *IDEC RECORD*, a member newsletter; and many other programs, reference materials, and activities to assist members in improving the teaching of interior design. The IDEC web site contains information for the general public and has a members-only link that gives members access to a large body of interior design information specifically for use in teaching.

Full-time interior design educators who also have received appropriate interior design education and have professional work experience may become *professional* members, the highest membership level. Qualifications for professional member status are a diploma, a bachelor's degree or master's degree in interior design or a related field; two years of full-time teaching experience in interior design. If a professional member also practices professionally in interior design, he or she also must complete the NCIDQ examination or be a professional member of an association.

Members who teach interior design courses but do not qualify for professional membership may join as an *associate* member. Associate members may advance to professional membership when they meet the qualifications. Associate members who practice professionally in interior design also are required to pass the NCIDQ examination or to be a professional member of an association.

Affiliate membership is open to those who are not eligible for other membership but who are interested in interior design education.

Graduate student membership is available for those who are enrolled in postgraduate degree programs.

Interior Designers of Canada (IDC)

Interior Designers of Canada (IDC), founded in 1972, is the national professional association in Canada. IDC works in coordination with eight provincial associations:

- Interior Designers Institute of British Columbia
- Registered Interior Designers of Alberta
- Interior Designers Association of Saskatchewan
- Professional Interior Designers Institute of Manitoba
- Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario
- Société des designeurs d'Intérieur de Québec
- Association of Registered Interior Designers of New Brunswick
- Association of Interior Designers of Nova Scotia

The purpose of IDC is to "advance the interior design profession and to promote high quality in education and practice from coast to coast" (IDC Web site, 2000). Its members work in all specialties of interior design and design education throughout the provinces of Canada. Members of IDC must hold the highest level of membership in their provincial association and must pass the international NCIDQ qualification examination.

IDC offers its members conferences, a newsletter entitled *Communiqué*; education and learning opportunities through continuing education classes and programs; and forums related to government relations, the environment, and cross-disciplinary collaboration; and assistance to members who are working in the global market.

The eight provincial associations have individual membership categories and requirements. The reader should contact the appropriate provincial association for information. There is a direct link to those associations at the IDC web site. Their address can be found in the Appendix.

Other Professional Organizations

A few words should be said about other professional organizations with which the interior designer may wish to affiliate. First, interior designers who specialize in the design of retail stores and shopping centers may wish to affiliate with the Institute of Store Planners (ISP).

International Facility Management Association (IFMA) is a professional association for those who are actively engaged in corporate facility management and planning. IFMA has several membership categories, depending on the applicant's actual work experiences in corporate facility management and planning.

Some interior designers may be eligible for affiliated membership in the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The AIA is, of course, the professional organization for professional architects. Interior designers cannot become professional members of the AIA unless they meet the qualifications as an architect.

Designers who are interested in specializing in kitchen or bath design often affiliate with the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA). There are several membership categories in NKBA, based on the type of work in which the candidate is engaged.

There are several other smaller or more specialized professional associations for interior designers or for those who are affiliated with the interior design profession. Complete information regarding the qualification and application procedures of these associations can be obtained from the national offices listed in the Appendix.

NCIDQ Examination

The NCIDQ is an independent corporation that was formed in 1974 and is concerned with maintaining standards of practice through the testing of members of the profession and the establishment of requirements for legal qualifications

for licensing and title registration. The mission of NCIDQ is "to aid and assist the general public by establishing and administering an examination to determine which practitioners of interior design shall be certified as competent to practice in the field of interior design" (NCIDQ, 2000).

The NCIDQ examination is the recognized qualifying examination for professional membership in ASID, IIDA, IDC, and IDEC. The NCIDQ examination is also the primary examination in those U.S. states and Canadian provinces that have licensing, certification, or other registration statutes.

Ongoing research is conducted by NCIDQ to evaluate and analyze candidate performance, educational and professional practice skill and knowledge requirements, and methods to promote public protection by the interior design profession. The board of directors of NCIDQ conducted a major research study in 1998, in order to gather the most up-to-date information about the practice of interior design so as to revise the NCIDQ examination. Using the research study as its guide, the board of directors determined that the format of the examination needed to be revised.

The NCIDQ examination is given twice during the year—usually in April and October—at examination centers throughout the United States and Canada. When a designer has achieved a minimum combination of six years of education and work experience, the designer contacts the NCIDQ office for application materials. In some states, such as in Texas, candidates must apply to the state regulatory board in order to take the examination.

Eligibility requirements consist of a minimum of six years of combined educational and practical experience. A candidate may take the examination if he or she has (1) a four- or five-year degree in interior design, or equivalent educational credit, plus two years of professional experience; (2) a three-year certificate in interior design or equivalent credits plus three years of professional experience; or (3) a two-year certificate or equivalent credits, plus four years of professional experience. Educational requirements at the different levels have a minimum number of semester or quarter hours that the candidates must complete in interior design-related classes. All candidates must have a minimum of two years of academic training in interior design, in combination with four years of work experience, to equal a minimum of six years. All candidates must have a minimum of two years of full-time professional work experience. Recommendations and academic transcripts are also required of all candidates.

As of the fall of 2000, the examination is divided into three sections and is given over two consecutive days—usually Friday and Saturday. A candidate may take all three sections of the exam at one time or may elect to take individual sections or combinations of sections at different times. Only sections of the examination that are not passed must be taken again. Unless a professional association or a state statute has different requirements, there is no time limit within which a candidate must pass the examination.

The three sections of the examination are divided into two multiple-choice, computer-graded tests and one practicum section. The multiple-choice exams are based on six performance domains that are characterized within the work of interior design: (1) project organization, (2) programming, (3) schematics, (4) design development, (5) contract documents, and (6) contract administration. A discussion of the project activities that occurs within these domains is presented in Chapter 27 on project management. A brief description of the three exam sections follows.

Section I: *Principles and Practices of Interior Design.* This is a multiple-choice test consisting of 150 questions. It addresses the domains of

project organization, programming, schematics, and design development.

Section II: *Contract Development and Administration*. This multiple-choice test addresses the domains of contract documents and contract administration.

Multiple-choice questions focus on practice situations, knowledge, and activities associated with the domains. Many questions incorporate drawings, pictures, symbols, and textual formats that are typical in the interior design profession, requiring candidates to recall, apply, and analyze information.

Section III: *Schematics and Design Development*. This is the practicum section of the exam. It requires that candidates produce a design solution. In this version of the examination, candidates are required to plan a multifunctional facility. All candidates are given the same problem. Besides being required to interpret a design program and to provide a design solution, all candidates are required to apply principles of accessible design to their solutions.

An examination guide is available from NCIDQ. This guide provides the candidate with an overview of the three sections of the examination, a bibliography of source information, sample multiple-choice questions, and a sample practicum exam. It provides valuable general information about the examination, the rules for the exam, the schedule, and other important information.

The STEP Program

ASID has devised special study programs to help candidates prepare for the NCIDQ. Though sponsored by ASID, any candidate for the NCIDQ exam may participate. This Self-Testing Exercises for Preprofessionals (STEP) program helps applicants learn the study and design skills that are needed to pass the examinations. STEP program leaders point out that the program is not a crash course in design; rather, it is a means to help preprofessionals learn to study.

The STEP workshop, conducted by educators and professionals who are specially trained by ASID, provides a review of applicable material and study skills for both the multiple-choice and practicum sections of the examination. Emphasis is generally placed on the practicum portion of the examination. Workshop activities take candidates through various exercises, which help them assess where they need additional work prior to taking the examination. Practice tests covering the multiple-choice sections of the examination are available as well.

The STEP workshop is commonly conducted over a two-day period. Workshops are generally sponsored by local ASID chapters. Registration fees are slightly higher for non-ASID members. Registration information can be obtained from either local ASID chapter offices or the ASID web site.

Licensing and Title Acts

Licensing, title acts, legal recognition, certification—all of these are topics that are important to the interior design professional and student. Licensing efforts have been a part of the profession's activities since 1951, when the Southern California chapter of AID attempted to get a bill passed in the state legislature. They failed. However, AID did prepare an examination at a later time. Today, the ASID and IIDA national organizations, as well as chapter organizations in numerous states, continue to fight for licensing. The professional associations seek licensing and/or title registration on a state-by-state basis.

Licensing and title acts are related, because both require legislation and state control. Title acts are, in fact, a type of licensing. *Title acts* are concerned with limiting the use of certain professional titles, such as *interior designer*, *registered interior designer*, or *certified interior designer* to individuals who meet agreed-upon qualifications and who have registered with a state board. Licensing, or *practice acts*, establish guidelines concerning what an individual can or cannot do in the practice of a profession in a particular state. Individuals who wish to engage in a profession guided by a licensing or practice act must also register with a state board.

To differing degrees, licensing and title acts, in some respects serve to limit who can practice a profession. A title act does very little to limit who can practice the activities of interior design, whereas practice acts do a great deal. The intent of legislation, however, is to indicate to the consumer which individuals have met the specific criteria that are related to education and work experience, indicating that they have acquired professional competence in the field. Licensing or title registration legislation also provides a definitive measure of experience and educational preparation for those who practice interior design. Licensing serves to protect the consumer from unregulated practice by those who do not have proper educational background, training, and experience in the profession of interior design.

Title acts only restrict the use of the title *interior designer* (or other designated title) to those who meet the qualifications of the state title act. Interior designers who meet these qualifications must also register with a state agency or board. An individual who does not meet the qualifications of the title act may not use the title of *interior designer* in any of his or her business dealings. With title registration, the title of *interior designer* connotes to the public that the individual has met the highest standards of the profession and can thereby provide the most competent service to the consumer. These standards are related to education, experience, abiding by a code of conduct, and passing a qualifying examination.

Practice acts are commonly legislated for those professions that deal with the health and safety of the public and that employing individuals in those professions. Lawyers, doctors, architects, and engineers have had to meet state practice act regulations for many years. Practice acts definitely limit who may practice a profession, since they usually require that individuals meet very stringent qualification criteria. When a person enters into a contractual relationship with an unlicensed professional, the contract may or may not be enforceable, depending on the statutes in the individual states.

Registered interior designers are allowed to stamp their drawings with a stamp or a seal and signature, showing that the drawings have been prepared by a registered professional. Work executed by a nonregistered designer would not have this stamp.

In the 1980s, some of the emphasis on licensing was the result of increasing pressure to limit the practice of interior design. Architects, building contractors, and taxing authorities in various states, sought to limit the practice of interior design by trying to legislate certain activities that are common to the interior designer to other more "traditional" professions (ASID, 1985). Unfortunately, this occurred again in 1999 when the International Code Council met to develop a revised model building code. As of this writing, the International Code Council upheld that the term "design professional," for the purpose of stamping drawings, is as follows: "The definition of 'design professional' be as defined by the statutory requirements of the professional registration laws of the state or jurisdiction in which the project is to be constructed" (International Code Council, 2000). This alone helps to protect an interior designer's right

to practice, where some regulation of interior design already exists. However, in several states, there remain efforts aimed at limiting what the interior designer can do.

Those who have been actively engaged in bringing licensing legislation to their states would all agree that it has not been an easy task. Nor will it be in the future. Despite the frustration of many years of struggling with legislators and those who would rather that interior design not be licensed, many states have obtained some type of interior design legislation. In 1982, Alabama became the first state to pass a title registration act. As of January 2000, there are 21 jurisdictions that have passed licensing legislation: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, DC, and Wisconsin. Eight provinces in Canada have passed similar title registration acts. Florida, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, Louisiana, and Nevada currently are the only jurisdictions with practice acts for interior design. Many other states are working on legislation for either title registration or practice acts.

Readers may wish to contact the Government and Public Affairs Department of ASID, the Legislative Issues Committee of IIDA, or the national offices of other professional associations for information on legislation within the reader's jurisdiction.

Whether one works toward licensing through title registration or practice acts, interior design professionals and students must be prepared to accept the legal and ethical responsibilities that such recognition brings. The next chapter discusses the codes of conduct of ASID and IIDA; later chapters cover the legal responsibilities that one must face.

Continuing Education

Like all other professionals, interior designers receive continuing education through seminars, workshops, lectures, and intensive professional studies in their field. Many designers seek postgraduate education in interior design, architecture, and business, to name just a few broad areas. Sometimes, designers obtain additional education in order to increase their technical skills and to allow themselves an opportunity to advance within the firm in which they work. Sometimes, they seek additional education in order to retrain for a new area of expertise, such as lighting design or CAD, or to move into management. Not all professionals have the time to seek college credit, however. And many professionals do not really desire the depth of study that is required when taking college courses.

Courses that provide continuing educational units (CEUs) furnish short-term course work in a variety of areas. Continuing education courses last anywhere from one hour to a few days; most common are all-day courses. The course length and level of difficulty are primary factors in determining the number of CEU credits available for the class. Most CEU classes are under 1.0 credits. One-tenth of an hour of credit (0.1) is given for each hour of the class. CEU classes provide a means for professional interior designers to remain current in the practice of interior design. Courses are available in almost every topic and area of the profession: theory and creativity; interior design; interior design education; design specialties; technical knowledge; codes and standards; communications systems; business and professional practice; and history and culture. The practitioner and student can find seminars on color

and light, rendering techniques, designing with accessibility standards, kitchen design, improving personal and professional effectiveness, and areas of business practices, such as business planning and marketing. This provides only a very minuscule view of the breadth of available seminars and CEU classes.

Each association provides a number of CEU classes each year, most often sponsored at the local chapter level or as part of a national conference. In addition, numerous CEU classes of various credit amounts are offered at the professional association national and regional conferences. CEU classes are also offered at major market shows, such as Neocon.

It is important to note that reciprocity exists between many of the professional associations. It is possible for an ASID member, for example, to take a class sponsored by IIDA, IFMA, or another association. The member should check with his or her association to determine if a course offered by a different professional association will be applicable to his or her association. In some cases, the member may need to send a formal request to the association to determine if the course will be accepted.

Members also need to understand clearly that it is up to the individual member to keep track of his or her CEU credits. To receive CEU credit, members must be sure they complete the course credit application and provide a CEU fee that is generally in addition to the course fee. The individual member's CEU file is maintained by the NCIDQ. If the reader's association requires CEU credits to maintain membership, the member must request that transcripts be sent to the association's office. The NCIDQ does not automatically inform the professional association of a professional's CEU course work each year.

Continuing education is also very important because several states that have passed licensing or title registration acts require continuing education for maintaining registration. The exact requirements are the responsibility of the licensing board in each state. It is the individual's responsibility to inform state boards of any CEU activity.

Today's technological, litigious society makes it incumbent upon interior design professionals to keep current regarding the many technical, legal, and business skills and concepts of the profession. Changes in the ways in which design services are offered, changes in the products we specify, changes in the legal influences with which the designer must deal—all of these make continuing education an important part of being a professional interior designer.

Summary

This chapter is filled with a large amount of information. It tries to set the stage for the practical discussion of topics related to the professional practice of interior design from the business person's point of view. This background or, to use a design metaphor, foundation of information about history, professional associations, education, licensing, and more is important to the overall study of the profession and how it functions as a business.

Having an understanding of what the roots and issues of a profession are is an important part of being a member of that profession. Knowing what it is all about is crucial to making the time spent in the career a meaningful commitment of one's time and effort rather than an ordinary "job." Society tends to grant professionals higher status, money, and respect. Yet these do not come only with accomplishing the educational criteria of the profession. They come to the individual who has the attitude of service, commitment, and knowledge that is expected of the professional.

Being a professional means commitment to one's colleagues, clients, allied professionals, and students. Being a professional means being involved in an appropriate association, not just becoming a member. Being a professional means having sufficient pride in one's profession to fight for the profession throughout ethical performance and legislation. All these concepts and more demonstrate what a professional interior designer should be.

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Note: There are dozens of additional articles, brochures, newsletters, and mailings on these topics. It is not possible to list all of these in this list.