

This book is written for soon-to-be architectural graduates and architectural interns in their first few years of professional practice. It may also be helpful for those individuals who have not taken the Architectural Registration Exam (ARE) and find themselves in a perpetual state of “internship,” as well as those seeking nontraditional careers. But first and foremost, it is a survival guide for interns pursuing architectural licensure.

In writing this book, I do not claim to have all the answers or the definitive solution to every internship situation. However, as a young practitioner and former IDP coordinator, as well as a mentor to many interns, I have seen what has been successful in terms of navigating internship and what could be better. In an effort to provide a viewpoint that is not myopic, I have solicited contributions from young architects and interns around the globe. Their essays are interspersed throughout the text and will hopefully provide you with additional insights. The contributors represent a variety of alternative viewpoints, not all of which I share. However, their contributions reflect the diversity of opinions and experiences that are present within our profession. If you find that a particular essay does not suit your needs, skip it and read another. It is for you to decide what is pertinent to you and your career.

Think of this as a book of questions that can prompt you to solve your own personal internship problems. As with any architectural problem, there is not just one right answer; the number of correct solutions is infinite. While some suggestions are

provided in the pages that follow, they are intended as a guide to help in your decision making. What has worked for others may not be the correct approach for you. Read through the suggestions, talk to other interns to see what they have experienced, seek the counsel of your mentor, and make the decisions that feel right for you.

Chapter 2 begins with a series of questions that can help you develop a sense of your career intentions. Think of it as planning for a trip. Where is it that you want to go, and what do you want to do when you get there? Subsequent chapters provide a framework to help you prepare for various milestones in your development: finding a job, going through performance reviews, taking exams, and later becoming a leader in a firm or starting a firm of your own.

Acknowledging that we all have different ways of learning and synthesizing information, I have presented material in a variety of ways. In the early chapters, there are checklists and worksheets you can use when making decisions about where you want to live and work. Throughout the book, you will find “tips” embedded in the text. For some of you, these will be obvious statements; for others, they may highlight and bring attention to a common oversight or stumbling block.

There may be suggestions that will be entirely appropriate and helpful to you without much modification. But there may be others that simply don't fit with your personality or approach to your career. Pick and choose what you think will work for you. As you learn alternative methods that work better, make note of them in the margins or at the end of each chapter. A blank page has intentionally been left just for that purpose. That way, when you become a mentor to someone else, you can relay what was successful for you. You will likely find mentors along your career path who will augment what you read and offer their own experiences.

While you could read this book cover to cover, it is intended to help you as different circumstances present themselves throughout your career. Using this book as a departure point may help you think about how to approach a situation. The table of contents is intended to help you navigate the chapters and quickly find the pertinent sections. Where appropriate, resources are listed at the end of each chapter. A bibliography at the end of the book provides a suggested list of texts for further reading on particular topics that are referenced throughout.

## Becoming an Architect: An Overview

While this could be the subject of a book in itself, if you have not yet begun your journey into architectural education, here are the basics. It is important to understand that one cannot legally call oneself an architect until one has satisfied the requirements of one's state registration board. Furthermore, licensure in one state does not immediately grant the title of architect to that person in any other state.

## The Three-Legged Stool: Education, Experience, and Examination

This metaphor is a commonly used by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)<sup>1</sup>. Like a stool that needs three legs to support itself, an architectural candidate needs to obtain three “legs” to be considered an architect: education, experience, and examination. Please note that each state registration board has slightly different requirements for licensure, and many have Web sites; be sure to contact your state registration board for specific requirements. Most states have the following combination of education, experience, and examination requirements.

### *Education*

A professional education in the United States is satisfied by a National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)<sup>2</sup> accredited degree in architecture. Before starting your architectural education, you should verify that your program is NAAB-accredited, as this will affect your eligibility for licensure in some states. There are three types of NAAB-accredited degrees:

1. A five-year Bachelor of Architecture program intended for students who enter immediately after high school or who have no previous architecture training.
2. A two-year Master of Architecture program for students who hold pre-professional undergraduate degrees in architecture or a related area (engineering, landscape architecture, etc.).
3. A three- or four-year Master of Architecture programs for students with an undergraduate degree in another discipline.

NAAB provides a list of accredited schools on its Web site. In addition, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)<sup>3</sup> publishes annually a comprehensive list of programs offered by the various architectural schools in North America. This list includes a description of the degrees offered and the educational focus of the school. However, it should be noted that *not* all schools listed in the ACSA publication are NAAB-accredited programs.

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<sup>1</sup> NCARB ([www.ncarb.org](http://www.ncarb.org)) is a national body that develops model standards for licensure and for the regulation of architectural practice, which are in turn adopted by the individual state registration boards. NCARB is responsible for the administration of the Intern Development Program and the Architect Registration Examination.

<sup>2</sup> NAAB ([www.naab.org](http://www.naab.org)) is the sole agency authorized to accredit U.S. professional degree programs in architecture.

<sup>3</sup> ACSA ([www.acsa-arch.org](http://www.acsa-arch.org)) is a nonprofit, membership association founded in 1912 to advance the quality of architectural education. ACSA represents over 250 schools, including all accredited programs in the United States and government-sanctioned schools in Canada, as well as special programs offering two-year and international programs.

Candidates with degrees from schools outside the United States must obtain an Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA)<sup>4</sup> evaluation of their degree from NAAB.

### *Experience*

The Intern Development Program (IDP)<sup>5</sup> is a national program administered by NCARB that, as of press time, has been adopted by 49 of the 50 states. To satisfy the requirements of this program, interns are required to obtain experience in 16 categories of architectural practice. The minimum amount of time it may take to satisfy those requirements is three years of full-time employment. Much like the residency period for a medical intern, IDP is intended to expose architectural interns to a broad range of experiences that they may encounter as a registered architect. Additional information, as well as tips for successfully completing this program, can be found in Chapter 3.

### *Examination*

The Architect Registration Exam (ARE)<sup>6</sup> is the final step in the registration process, sometimes referred to as licensure. The ARE has nine sections—six multiple-choice and three graphic—that represent the various aspects of professional practice. Chapter 4 addresses the ARE in depth and provides some exam preparation tips.

If you have not already begun your journey toward licensure and you are interested in learning more about the process of becoming a registered architect, several books on the subject are listed in the bibliography. And if you have begun, I hope that the following chapters offer you guidance and support in these formative years of your career.

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<sup>4</sup>EESA assists those individuals who wish to apply for NCARB certification or for registration by an NCARB member board and who do not have a professional degree in architecture from an NAAB-accredited school of architecture. EESA often works with internationally educated applicants and broadly experienced architects. Information can be found on the NAAB Web site ([www.naab.org](http://www.naab.org)).

<sup>5</sup>Detailed information about IDP can be found on the NCARB Web site ([www.ncarb.org](http://www.ncarb.org)) and by reading the IDP Guidelines, which are available upon request from the Web site.

<sup>6</sup>While architectural registration is granted by the individual state registration boards, the ARE is administered nationally by the overseeing body of NCARB. Detailed information about the examination can be found at [www.ncarb.org](http://www.ncarb.org).