

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 14, 2020

TO: Architect Licensing Advisors

FROM: Harry M. Falconer, Jr., FAIA, NCARB, HonD, Hon. FCARM
Vice President, Experience + Education

RE: AXP® & ARE®...and Coronavirus

Dear Architect Licensing Advisor:

I hope this correspondence finds you, your families, students, and colleagues safe and well! As our community navigates the COVID-19 outbreak, we know this is a difficult period for many of our customers. I want to reassure you that NCARB is closely following the ongoing developments and is working hard to provide our community with the services you need in this time of uncertainty.

While NCARB's physical office is closed, our full team continues to operate remotely, and our services remain available to you, students, licensure candidates, and architects. We remain focused on our mission to facilitate the licensure and credentialing of architects, at a time when the health, safety, and welfare aspect of our work is brought to the forefront of our thoughts and efforts.

We have begun to receive concerns and questions from some of you as well as our NCARB record and NCARB certificate holders. Please know that we are aware of the challenges facing our licensure candidates and architects: firms cancelling hiring students for summer employment; firms freezing hiring/withdrawing offers from graduates entering the workplace full time; firms' interest in only hiring individuals with experience; layoffs; as well as no access to the ARE due to the temporary closure of Prometric test centers. Looking forward, we cautiously but anxiously await an understanding of what the future 'recovery rate' will be of our profession and the construction industry.

We are very aware of and understand concerns about employment experience opportunities for students, graduates, and licensure candidates. However, NCARB has no plans to offer additional ways to gain AXP experience as a response to the pandemic. We are not in a position to make any modifications to the AXP. Our position is supported by the following facts:

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- AXP is focused only on the core requirements, that the profession determined, to develop competency in the tasks one should be competent in performing at the point of licensure, independently.
- The development of AXP led to the elimination of ‘elective’ hours, and ‘other experience’ that was ‘self-directed’ and/or gained through means other than actual experience performing the required tasks. This reduced the experience requirement by 1860 hours.
- AXP requires experience to be ‘paid experience’, not academic education or self-directed education. There is no substitute for actual experience.
- Licensure demonstrates to the public that the architect has had the education and experience, and has been tested on their knowledge & skills to be competent to perform architectural services independently, protecting their HSW.
- The competency of an architect at licensure cannot be compromised or changed because of economic conditions. Therefore, the means of gaining competency through education and experience cannot be compromised.

Adding recent historical context -- as NCARB transitioned the experience program from IDP to AXP, we added a number of opportunities by which a candidate could earn ‘core’ experience in Setting O. Those new experience opportunities that were added in 2008/2009 were not “based on the need to find solutions” for the failed economy. All core experience types added were deemed by the Experience Committee as valid experience that should count – and were still experience based. These experience opportunities still exist under Setting O of AXP. The detailed list can be found [here on our website](#) and on page 16 of the [AXP Guidelines](#).

For licensure candidates who have been and/or continue to participate in the AXP, here are a few talking points you can use that should help minimize concerns so that they do not miss out on opportunities to further their career.

Experience Does Not Expire

- All experience that is submitted to the candidate’s AXP supervisor and ultimately approved will not expire as long as it complies with the rules of the experience setting.
- Once the experience is submitted by the licensure candidate, the reporting requirement is no longer a concern, even if a supervisor is slow to approve it.

In other words, there is no time limit on approving AXP reports, just a requirement to submit valid experience in a timely manner.

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Submit Reports When There is Experience to Report

- Licensure candidates are not required to continuously submit experience reports if they have no experience to report.
- If they are no longer employed in an acceptable experience setting, they do not need to submit anything.
- However, candidates can always take advantage of “Other Experience Opportunities” under Setting O to continue making progress in the AXP while not employed.

Some licensure candidates report a belief that they need to submit a report every six months or they will lose AXP. They only need to submit a report if they have experience to submit; if there is no experience to submit then they do not need to worry.

Work Performed Remotely Qualifies for AXP

- As long as a candidate’s AXP supervisor is aware of what the licensure candidate is doing and has control over and knowledge of their work, licensure candidates can still submit experience gained while working virtually, and the supervisor can still approve it. They do not need to be co-located in the same workplace.
- It is important for licensure candidates to continue to collaborate with their supervisor.
- If the working relationship has changed from being co-located to a virtual workplace, the licensure candidate may need to have more frequent check-ins to ensure their supervisor is aware of their progress toward developing competencies, as well as the AXP experience areas in which the candidate needs more work experience.

Report in Shorter Timeframes

- Licensure candidates should check in with their supervisor to determine how often they should report their experience.
- NCARB recommends submitting experience in shorter time frames such as every couple of weeks or not longer than once a month.
- This will help mitigate any potential issues if there is a change in employment, or if their supervisor becomes ill or unreachable.

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Reporting Requirement Extensions

- From the [AXP Guidelines](#) (p 19) - Provisions have been made for reasonable extensions to the two-month filing period.
- For more information on the reporting requirements and extensions, please refer to the [NCARB website](#).

We know you that you may be advising licensure candidates who have been testing or may be planning to test soon. We continue to work with Prometric to understand and convey their plans for testing centers here in the U.S. and abroad. In response to the closure of testing centers, we have updated our [ARE 5.0 Testing and Rescheduling Policies](#). It is important that you advise your colleagues to visit this site often as policies are subject to change depending on availability of testing centers.

We are also aware that some of our customers may experience a range of challenges as a result of Coronavirus. If someone you know is impacted, please have them contact [Customer Relations](#) to discuss how we can help. Please encourage your colleagues to reach out to us for assistance if they have any questions or concerns regarding our services.

We encourage each of you to stay informed and connected through our website's [Coronavirus Update](#). You'll find important information and resources on the AXP and the ARE. You'll also discover ways you and your colleagues can [stay connected with NCARB](#).

We truly thank you for your continued collaboration, and welcome your thoughts, questions, suggestions, and feedback! You can reach us directly at advisors@ncarb.org. We also encourage you to share your thoughts, ask questions, and collaborate on the Architect Licensing Advisors Online Community, which is easily accessed through your NCARB account.

Thank you for being a part of NCARB's Architect Licensing Advisor community!

Stay safe!