

LICENSURE REVIEW & UPDATE by Marjorie Pitz, FASLA, Nov. 5, 2012

The Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience and Interior Design (AELSLAGID) is responsible for the licensure/certification of 18,380 professionals currently, broken down as follows:

441	Landscape Architects
3,558	Architects
12,785	Engineers
636	Land Surveyors
672	Geoscience
788	Interior Designers (certification, instead of licensure)

The purpose of licensure is to protect the public's **health, safety, and welfare**. Every licensed professional has passed 3 hurdles: **1—Education; 2—Exam; 3—Experience**. Licensees sign an oath to protect the public, to conduct their business professionally and ethically, and to earn 24 hours of professional development every two years.

Minnesota landscape architects gained licensure in 1976—many years after engineers, architects, and land surveyors. Dedicated LA leaders spent years prior to 1976 negotiating with architects, engineers and land surveyors to gain their support of licensure for landscape architecture. Here is a link to the resulting statutes, with Minnesota's legal definition for LA: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=326.02 - Subd. 4a Practice of landscape architecture> Landscape architects who had practiced over 3 years in 1976 submitted proof of their experience, and were grandfathered in without taking the national exam. Since 1976, LA candidates have been required to pass the national exam.

In 2011, the Board of AELSLAGID changed rules related to landscape architecture education and experience. Candidates must have an *accredited* LA Bachelor's or Master's degree. An MLA degree must be partnered with a Bachelor's degree in a *related field*. No longer may you substitute experience for an accredited degree. It is not possible to become licensed with just a Bachelors of Environmental Design, or Landscape Design & Planning degree. Here's a link to MN landscape architecture education rules: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=1800.1500>

Graduates with an accredited landscape architecture degree may not use the words landscape architect or landscape architecture with their name until they become licensed. Exceptions are to: 1—state your educational degree; 2—state your membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects. The terms “intern landscape architect”, and “landscape architect-in-training” are not authorized in Minnesota, and should not be used. Graduates may only practice landscape architecture under direct supervision of a licensed professional. Graduates may not *tend to convey the impression* that they are a landscape architect, but must refer to themselves as a landscape designer, planner, urban designer, project manager, or other term of choice.

Unlicensed people who associate the words “landscape architect/landscape architecture” with

their name are violating MN statute, and can have charges of practicing without a license/ "holding out" brought against them by the Board of AELSLAGID. This applies to social media, printed material, and verbal claims. Firms may not call an unlicensed employee "project landscape architect". Complaints may be filed by citizens, licensees, clients, or the Board of AELSLAGID. People guilty of a licensure complaint must declare their disciplinary action to other states from whom they wish to obtain licensure.

Landscape Architecture Registration Exam (LARE): Since September 2012, the LARE is totally digital, with no CAD or hand drafting required. There are now 4 sections to the exam: 1—Project and Construction Administration; 2—Inventory and Analysis; 3—Design; 4--Grading, Drainage, and Construction Documentation.

For more information: <https://www.clarb.org/Candidates/Pages/examoverview.aspx>

CLARB is considering allowing Section 1 to be taken at graduation, which other professions do for the academic portions of their exams.

Licensure in 50 states: Every state now has licensure in landscape architecture, as does British Columbia, Ontario and Puerto Rico. Threats to licensure include: state governments closing boards due to poor economics; and growing pressure to de-regulate. Doreen Frost, Exec. Dir. of AELSLAGID, anticipates possible sunset review of the board in the next few years. About 30 states retain landscape architecture lobbyists, while ASLA-MN does not.

Summary of MN 2011-12 Licensure and Enforcement: 1,860 new licenses, of which 34 were for LA's (19 by exam, 15 by comity). The AELSLAGID Board processed 171 complaints, and 43 resolutions resulted against: 6 unlicensed individuals, 5 architects, 28 professional engineers, 3 land surveyors and 1 landscape architect. Five licenses were suspended, three licenses were surrendered and one license was revoked. A total of \$90,000 in civil penalties was assessed. Complaints are described at <http://www.aelslagid.state.mn.us/enf.html>

Complaints may involve:

- 1—Practicing a profession without a license/ holding out as a professional
- 2—Endangering the public with negligent work
- 3—Misconduct (which includes: plan stamping; conflict of interest; bribes; false statements; fraud; knowledge of misconduct by others; felony convictions; discrimination)

Summary: Licensure is formal recognition that an individual has demonstrated sufficient knowledge, skill and ability to practice the profession without endangering the health, safety and welfare of the public. Licensure:

- Conveys legal professional privileges and responsibilities and allows the licensee to use the title "landscape architect."
- Increases the number of job and advancement opportunities
- According to the [2010 ASLA Salary Survey](#), licensees earn an average of \$77,700 annually while unlicensed individuals earn only \$52,700 annually.