



**National Council for
Interior Design Qualification**

September 13, 2011

Much has been written about what NCIDQ has or has not proposed regarding our standards for the Certificate. Let me take this opportunity to clarify. For three years NCIDQ has been investigating the possibility of adding a path to eligibility for the Examination that would accommodate individuals who do not meet our current eligibility requirements but still possess the same competencies as those who meet the current requirements. We are tentatively calling this the “Broadly Experienced Interior Designer” program, or “BEID.”

1. Nothing has been decided. NCIDQ has charged a task force of volunteers to investigate this possibility. This is something we do with all potential new programs or requirements. We start with research, then build a draft program and then test that program. We are currently conducting a pilot test of this possible new eligibility path. After all steps in our investigation are complete, the NCIDQ Board of Directors will have the options to adopt the new requirements, not adopt them or send work back to the task force for further investigation. At this time, there is no change to our requirements.

2. NCIDQ’s requirements for the Certificate include meeting an educational standard, meeting an experience standard and meeting an examination standard. Once a person successfully satisfies all three standards he or she is awarded the NCIDQ Certificate. The proposed BEID program is intended to cure educational deficiencies only. In other words, we are looking for a way to qualify individuals who, through many life events, have not had the opportunity to satisfy one of our current educational requirements or cannot adequately document their education. Some examples of the individuals caught in this situation are listed in #6 below.

3. In order to “cure an educational deficiency” an applicant to NCIDQ will be required to meet a higher standard of proof of interior design competence than anyone who currently applies for eligibility to NCIDQ through our current policies. Therefore, the new requirements, if they ever come into effect, will be a higher standard than any of our current standards. (Not lower, as some have asserted.) The new standard will require every individual who applies under this requirement to demonstrate that he or she has achieved competencies in each CIDA-based standard currently in effect. For current applicants with a CIDA-accredited degree, NCIDQ does not ask to see the work of every graduate to ensure that he or she has met every one of CIDA’s standards for accreditation. It’s possible to earn a CIDA-accredited degree and be a D+ student. NCIDQ’s new requirements, if they come into effect, will require a dossier from applicants that shows how and when they achieved competency in each CIDA standard. This will be a significant commitment for each person who elects to undertake this hurdle toward achieving the NCIDQ Certificate.

4. NCIDQ makes every effort to not discriminate with all of our standards and requirements. For the Examination, we have policies in place that accommodate candidates with various disabilities that might prevent them from demonstrating their true abilities without accommodations on the test. For the experience requirement, we do not place maximum time frames on when experience can be earned so that we do not discriminate against applicants who have a hard time finding work, or who take time off from their careers for a family. (Some professions do enforce maximum time frames.) With education, we currently allow six

different types of degree programs, but we currently can't accept an applicant who fell one or two semester hours short of meeting our requirements even if he or she was awarded a degree. We also can't accommodate those who graduated from schools that no longer exist and for whom there is no possibility of getting a transcript.

5. In doing our research, we learned that many professions have methods for accommodating deficiencies in one or more requirements. In the architecture profession, where we are commonly compared, there are two programs called the "Broadly Experienced Architect" and the "Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect" in the United States. NCIDQ's member regulatory boards in the U.S. include a dozen joint boards that regulate both interior design and architecture. These members of NCIDQ have asked NCIDQ to investigate a possibility of bringing our requirements into alignment with those of the architecture profession. That is one reason that we began this research.

6. As noted above, some people who have spent many years working in the interior design profession got there through a variety of means. Here are some examples of individuals who have been denied eligibility to the Examination. We believe that the new program, if it comes into effect, will assist them in becoming eligible for consideration:

A. Graduated with a degree in "environmental design" in the 1970s when that was a common term to catch all design fields. The school is no longer in business and we cannot get a copy of course descriptions to determine which courses on the transcript were interior design-focused. The transcript does not refer to the courses as "interior design."

B. Graduated with a degree in interior design from a school outside the United States or Canada, where "transcripts" as we know them in this country are not issued and no record of an individual's coursework is kept by the school, only the award of the degree.

C. Graduated with a bachelor's degree in interior design from a program not accredited by CIDA and with fewer than 60 semester hours of interior design related coursework. This person could wait and work in the field at least four years (thereby meeting our current requirement for applicants with a 40-semester hour certificate, degree or diploma), but wants to apply after two years of work experience.

D. Attended a full interior design degree program as an "audit" student, because he or she was never aware that courses not taken for credit would not be counted toward eligibility for NCIDQ.

7. If this new requirement comes into effect, it will only help applicants cure educational deficiencies. They still have to meet our experience requirements and they still have to take and pass all sections of the NCIDQ Examination before they will be awarded the NCIDQ Certificate.

8. Finally, NCIDQ's member regulatory boards will continue to establish their own standards for licensure which may be different than those for the NCIDQ Certificate. This is an opportunity for individuals to gain their NCIDQ Certificate to demonstrate their competencies to clients, employers, and the like. It will not be a guarantee that any particular state or provincial regulatory board will grant this individual the right or privilege to practice within that jurisdiction's standards, or that any professional association will accept that individual for membership.

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