



Association
of Registered
Interior Designers
of Ontario

FAQ Examination Alternative Program (EAP)

The Future of Interior Design in Ontario

In 2016 the Attorney General of Ontario recommended that ARIDO partner with the OAA and utilize the Architect's Act to advance greater regulation in the form of a practice licence for Registered Interior Designers.

In June 2018, a special members meeting was held, where ARIDO and the OAA presented the Direct Regulation Model to the ARIDO membership for approval. The members voted in favor, by majority vote, providing ARIDO the authority to move forward, in support of the Direct Regulation Model and work with the OAA towards implementing the model.

Since the 2018 vote, ARIDO and OAA have been busy working to build the foundational frameworks required to implement the model. The Examination Alternative Project (EAP) is the final development project to support Ontario's move towards greater regulation.

What is the Examination Alternative Project?

In 2019, ARIDO and the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) agreed that an alternative to the NCIDQ exams should be developed as a Canadian option in relation to the future Direct Regulation Model.

This Canadian Alternative was intended to be a second option, in addition to the NCIDQ exams, for satisfying ARIDO's examination requirement. This model would mimic and align with the current regulatory framework that licenses Architects in Ontario.

To this end, ARIDO has launched the Examination Alternative Project (EAP) to develop a Canadian Alternative to the NCIDQ exams. The goal is to ensure a fair and equitable path to qualification as an Interior Designer in Ontario.

What is the purpose of this Project?

ARIDO currently accepts Interns who have successfully completed the NCIDQ exams and have satisfied the examination requirement to become a Registered Member of ARIDO. To qualify to write the NCIDQ exams to become Registered in Ontario, Interns must meet ARIDO's Education and Experience requirements.

Under the future ARIDO/OAA Direct Regulation Model, ARIDO will continue to oversee and administer the current requirements of education, experience, and examination to qualify as a Registered Interior Designer. Once Registered with ARIDO, the member will qualify for a license to practice the protected scope of interior design. In addition, a stamp will be provided by the OAA which can be used to stamp and seal permit drawings. The OAA stamp will replace the requirement for a BCIN in Ontario to submit for interior design permit in this model.

ARIDO's role as a qualifying body will therefore be accountable to provincial government, the OAA and the Ontario Fairness Commissioner for assessing if Interns have met the requirements for registration

into the Interior Design profession. A core responsibility of ARIDO will be to oversee the validity, reliability, and fairness of the assessments used to satisfy qualification requirements. Additionally, ARIDO must possess the authority to alter these requirements in the interest of fair access. This includes assessments it offers directly, or assessments administered by third parties.

ARIDO and CIDQ Membership

Currently, as the only jurisdictional authority for Ontario, ARIDO has been a CIDQ member during its years of mandating the NCIDQ exams as meeting the examination requirement to become a Registered Interior Designer in Ontario.

Maintaining CIDQ membership has enabled ARIDO to authorize Intern members to write the NCIDQ examinations. In all cases, ARIDO would authorize a candidate to write where they have met ARIDO's education and/or supervised experience requirements. Upon ARIDO authorizing the candidate to write, CIDQ would enable the Intern to register and attempt the NCIDQ examinations. Upon successfully passing the NCIDQ exams, the Intern would then move on to applying for the Registered Interior Designer credential, available only through ARIDO and Bill Pr6. ARIDO is currently the only authority in Ontario that can enforce the protection of the title, Interior Designer.

The ability, through CIDQ membership, to authorize Intern members to attempt the NCIDQ enabled ARIDO to continue to recognize and mandate the NCIDQ exams for the new the Direct Regulation Model when it takes effect. This is because within the Direct Regulation Model, ARIDO's role will remain the same. ARIDO will continue to serve as the authority in Ontario that ensures the requirements are met for one to become a Registered Interior Designer and in the near future, to obtain a licence to practice the scope of interior design in Ontario.

What is the Current Situation Between ARIDO and CIDQ?

On May 8, 2024, the Council for Interior Design Qualification (CIDQ) advised ARIDO that due to the development of our Examination Alternative Project (EAP), CIDQ is terminating ARIDO's membership as of June 19, 2024.

Their claims revolve around By-laws, policies, and the terms and conditions of CIDQ membership. Specifically, CIDQ has expressed its position that by developing a second option for Ontario Candidates to meet the examination requirement, it puts ARIDO in conflict with CIDQ's policies. You can view a copy of their communication [here](#).

CIDQ has provided ARIDO with an ultimatum; cease the development activity of the EAP, or face termination of their membership.

Moments after advising ARIDO of this decision, CIDQ sent a communication to current and prospective Ontario-based NCIDQ Exam candidates, and NCIDQ Certificate holders, delivering this news. You can view the communication [here](#).

Believing this decision is short-sighted and made in haste, the ARIDO Board of Directors is thoroughly disappointed with CIDQ's announcement.

For roughly 20 years, ARIDO has recognized, promoted, and endorsed the NCIDQ examinations as meeting the examination requirement in Ontario. This decision is a complete failing by CIDQ to support the profession of interior design in our province, and to build-up the profession as a whole.

As a result of choosing not to collaborate with ARIDO, the Canadian regulatory framework, which we believe is distinct and unique from the framework in the United States, has been let down.

And so while we disagree and are disheartened with CIDQ's decision, the ARIDO Board of Directors stands firm in supporting and acknowledging the work completed to date on the Examination Alternative Project (EAP) and its critical role in strengthening the profession of interior design in Ontario as we move forward in partnership with the OAA and the Direct Regulation Model.

How does the EAP Impact Recognition in Other Canadian Provinces?

"Labour Mobility" refers to the ability of certified workers to practice their regulated occupation, throughout Canada, wherever opportunities to work in that occupation exist. Labour Mobility provisions of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement state that certified workers have to be recognized as qualified to work by a regulatory body in another province or territory which regulates that occupation, without having to go through significant additional training, work experience, examination, or assessment, unless an exception has been posted.

An ARIDO Qualified member who applies for Qualified membership to another Provincial Regulatory Body may only be asked to complete the registration certification and/or licensure process by the other Province. Under Labour Mobility, the ARIDO Qualified member should not be required by the other Provincial jurisdictions to be reassessed on their competencies or abilities to practice his/her occupation.

This means that ARIDO Registered members who chose to take the EAP instead of the NCIDQ examinations to meet the examination requirement, must be recognized in any other Canadian jurisdiction for reciprocity as Labour Mobility is upheld within Canada.

ARIDO recommends that those members who wish to pursue interior design work in the United States, consider the NCIDQ examinations.

I am an NCIDQ Certificate Holder. How Does This Impact Me?

This change does not impact you as you have already qualified as a Registered Interior Designer with ARIDO.

ARIDO Registered Membership grants the authority for you to use the protected title of "Interior Designer" in Ontario. No other credential or certification can provide the right to use the title. In addition, only ARIDO Registered Membership will be recognized in the Direct Regulation model as qualifying for a licence to practice in the near future.

What Does This Mean for ARIDO Interns?

ARIDO has been clear from the start of the EAP project; the EAP is intended to provide a second option to candidates for meeting the examination requirement. As per CIDQ's communication, current and prospective exam takers in Ontario who meet NCIDQ education and experience eligibility standards will continue to be able to write the NCIDQ Exam. Ultimately, with CIDQ's decision to remove ARIDO's membership, the decision to allow a candidate to write the NCIDQ exams will now fall with CIDQ.

CIDQ's decision to terminate ARIDO's membership will impact those Intern members who:

- Have entered as an Intern through the Intern Competencies Review System (ICRS) and/or
- Who are completing ARIDO's supervised work experience program, the Interior Design Experience Requirement (IDER).

While these Intern members have met ARIDO's requirements for Ontario, they may be denied the ability to write the NCIDQ examinations by CIDQ. These candidates will have access to ARIDO's EAP which will launch in March 2025.

continuing who are currently in one of the following situations should experience no issues with continuing on the NCIDQ examination path:

- You have applied to write the NCIDQ Exams and have been approved by CIDQ to write the examinations.
- You have written one or more of the NCIDQ exams; there should be no disruption in continuing to pursue and the pass the NCIDQ exams.

For ARIDO Interns who came into ARIDO through the ICRS or are completing IDER, and have not yet applied to write the NCIDQ exams; we recommend you enter the EAP route to ensure you do not experience any undue hardship or barriers.

What's Next?

ARIDO will continue the EAP project as it creates an important option for the future Direct Regulation Model.

The Examination Alternative Project (EAP) continues to make progress toward developing a Canadian alternative to ARIDO's current examination requirement for registration, thanks to valuable contributions from the design community in Ontario and other provinces. For detailed information and updates, please visit the [EAP project website](#).

Key Updates:

1. Open Comment Period

Feedback was gathered from individuals and provincial interior design bodies between February 12 to March 29, 2024. We shared the feedback with the Development Group for consideration.

2. Development Group and the Proposed Solution

A working session was held to review Comment Period feedback and to finalize specifications, including blueprint weightings.

3. Content Contributors

Content Contributors have been recruited and are beginning content development in May.

4. Next Steps

An information session will be held in June to provide a further update on this initiative.