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Canada, United States and Mexico Forge Agreement to Recognize Architect Credentials

Canadian
Architectural
Licensing
Authorities

Regroupement
des ordres
d'architectes du Canada

Tri-National Mutual Recognition Agreement Makes It Possible for Architects to Work Across North American Borders.

OTTAWA —Representatives from the architectural regulatory authorities of Canada, United States, and Mexico have announced a major agreement to mutually recognize architect credentials in the three countries, making it possible for architects to work across North American borders. The Canadian Architectural Licensing Authorities (CALA) in conjunction with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) in the United States and the Federacion de Colegios de Arquitectos de la Republica Mexicana (FCARM), announced the final implementation of the Tri-National Mutual Recognition Agreement for the International Practice of Architecture among the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

A Committee of:

Architectural Institute of British Columbia

Alberta Association of Architects

Northwest Territories Association of Architects

Saskatchewan Association of Architects

Manitoba Association of Architects

Ontario Association of Architects

Ordre des architectes du Québec

Architects' Association of New Brunswick/Association des architectes du Nouveau-Brunswick

Nova Scotia Association of Architects

Architects' Association of Prince Edward Island

Architects Licensing Board of Newfoundland & Labrador

The agreement represents over a decade of negotiations, bringing cross-border recognition of professional credentials from concept to reality in the spirit of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Qualified architects, from each country, who satisfy the requirements of the agreement, will be granted a credential that will lead to a license to practice architecture in the host country.

Informally known as the Tri-National Agreement, the pact outlines specific requirements that architects must satisfy when pursuing mutual recognition. These include education and work qualifications, as well as submitting documentation to confirm the individual's credentials. A few of the basic eligibility requirements include:

- Completion of a professional degree in architecture from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB/CCCA), Acreditadora Nacional de Programas de Arquitectura y Disciplinas del Espacio Habitable (ANPADEH), or recognized equivalent.
- A minimum of 10 years of post-licensure experience in the architect's home jurisdiction.
- Proof of "Good Standing" in the home jurisdiction, as verified by the local regulatory authority.
- Knowledge of the codes, laws, and other matters applicable to the practice of architecture in the host country.
- Submission of a dossier of work to satisfy the specific competencies outlined in the agreement related to "responsible control and comprehensive practice."
- Completion of an interview before a review panel in the host country, conducted in the language of the host country.

The agreement, along with similar programs, opens doors to qualified architects as the world and architectural practices become more globally connected. Architects interested in pursuing the opportunity for licensure outside of their home country should review the eligibility requirements and program information in greater detail which are available on the website of the Ontario Association of Architects, www.oaa.on.ca on behalf of CALA.

Additional details and standard application forms can be obtained by contacting the regulatory authority in the architect's home country.

The path to the Tri-National Agreement has its origins in the passage of NAFTA in 1994, which spurred a discussion between leaders and regulators of the architecture profession in Canada, the United State and Mexico to consider ways to facilitate the mutual recognition of licensure credentials among all three countries.

The initial agreement, signed in 2005 by the leaders of the profession in all three countries, marked what many considered to be one of the first professional services recognition programs under NAFTA. The study of the path to licensure in each country, the subsequent negotiations, the pilot program, and the final mechanisms for implementation continued over the following years, with support from volunteer leaders and staff from all three countries' licensing authorities.

Throughout the process, the underlying goal has been to remove barriers and provide qualified architects the opportunity to offer professional services across borders while ensuring the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. The agreement applies to architects from Canada, the United States or Mexico who have not used other mutual recognition agreements for initial licensure in their home country.

About CALA

The Canadian Architectural Licensing Authorities (CALA) represents nationally the eleven architectural regulators in Canada. These 11 provincial and territorial regulatory bodies are responsible for setting the standards for entry into the profession and for issuing registration/licenses to those who meet established standards of qualifications and practice. The regulators individually regulate the practice of architecture in order that the public interest is protected within their respective jurisdictions. Through CALA, the Canadian architectural regulators work collectively to develop and adopt nationally recognized standards and programs that help to meet their regulatory responsibilities as well as the needs of the architectural profession. CALA and its International Relations Committee represent the provincial/territorial regulators international. Work on international matters, including the Tri-National Mutual Recognition Agreement, is supported by the Canadian federal government.

About NCARB

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) is a nonprofit corporation comprising the legally constituted architectural registration board of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands as its members.

NCARB protects the public health, safety, and welfare by leading the regulation of the practice of architecture through the development and application of standards for licensure and credentialing of architects. In order to achieve these goals, the Council develops and recommends standards to be required of an applicant for architectural registration; develops and recommends standards regulating the practice of architecture; provides to Member Boards a process for certifying the qualifications of an architect for registration; and represents the interests of Member Boards before public and private agencies.

About FCARM & CONARC

The Federacion de Colegios de Arquitectos de la Republica Mexicana (FCARM) is a private, nonprofit association, legally incorporated, with jurisdiction within the Mexican Republic, and FCARM has the representation of its members before Federal, State, and Municipal Authorities. It also has representation with organizations in the public, private, and social sectors that have direct and indirect relationship with architects and their professional activity.

FCARM promotes the practice of architecture that guarantees protection of life, health, safety, liberty, welfare, and heritage of Mexican society. FCARM promotes the practice of architecture that guarantees protection of life, health, safety, liberty, welfare, and heritage of Mexican society. Through active participation in the Associated Educational Institutions of Architecture and with the Federal and State Agencies for professional licensure regulations, FCARM monitors the professional practice of architects through its associates all over Mexico.

Among its many objectives, include promoting and recording the Mexican Professional Certification and foreign architects who request and comply with the guidelines established by the National Registry of Professional Certification, CONARC (Consejo Nacional de Registro de la Certificacion Profesional).

CONARC is an organization created to contribute to the fulfillment of the agreements of international treaties in the field of architectural professional services signed by the Mexican Government. CONARC's main objectives include: support and facilitate the international professional practice of Mexican architects; contribute to allow the international professional practice of architectural services; and recognize the expertise of foreign architects who wish to practice in our country within the agenda of international agreements and in accordance with the procedures established for such purposes.

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