





Examination for Architects in Canada  
Examen des architectes du Canada

A black and white photograph of a modern architectural interior, showing a long, brightly lit hallway with a high ceiling and large glass panels. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down a long corridor.

# PREPARATION GUIDE FOR THE ExAC 2020

A green-tinted photograph of an architectural interior, showing a modern office space with large windows and a desk. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text.

The Examination for Architects in Canada (ExAC) which, to date, all of the Canadian Licensing Authorities have adopted, was developed to test the minimum standards of competency acquired by an Intern during the Internship period, to ensure both public safety and the professional and skilled delivery of architectural services. The ExAC has been offered since 2008.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 Purpose of the ExAC / page 3
- 02 ExAC Based on International Standards / page 3
- 03 Content / page 4
- 04 Question Types / page 5
- 05 Language and Units of Measurement / page 5
- 06 Delivery / page 5
- 07 Eligibility / page 6
- 08 Registration Period and Procedures / page 6
- 09 Fees / page 6
- 10 Personal Identification at the ExAC / page 7
- 11 At the Examination / page 7
- 12 Allowable Items at the ExAC / page 8
- 13 Prohibited Items at the ExAC / page 9
- 14 Special Accommodation at the ExAC / page 9
- 15 Cancellation of Registration / page 9
- 16 Reporting Results / page 10
- 17 Request for Review / page 10
- 18 Retaking the ExAC / page 11
- 19 Security Protocol at the ExAC / page 11
- 20 Conduct / page 12
- 21 Confidentiality Agreement / page 12
- 22 Equivalency/Transition / page 13
- 23 Registration Form for the ExAC / page 13
- 24 General and Specific Objectives / page 13
- 25 References/Resources / page 13
- 26 Questions & Answers / page 13

## PURPOSE OF THE ExAC

01

The ExAC has been developed to assess the Interns' competencies acquired during the Internship period, to ensure both public safety and the professional and skilled delivery of architectural services.

## ExAC BASED ON INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

02

The first priority of the Canadian Architectural Licensing Authorities (Licensing Authorities) was to create an examination, in English and French, which meets international standards for the development, administration, scoring and reporting of licensing examinations.

Development and validation teams of architects from the Licensing Authorities, guided by the test consultants, developed the general and specific objectives as well as the table of specifications, and wrote the items following strict metrological properties. The Licensing Authorities' goals include the optimization of the quality and fairness of every aspect of the ExAC.

The Committee for the ExAC, with a mandate to oversee the management of the examination, is composed of representatives from the profession from all regions of Canada who are members of the ExAC Agreement Protocol.

## CONTENT

# 03

The ExAC is composed of four sections covering the following themes:

### SECTION 1

- Programming
- Site and Environmental Analysis
- Coordinating Engineering Systems
- Cost Management
- Schematic Design
- Design Development

### SECTION 2

- Code Research

### SECTION 3

- Final Project

### SECTION 4

- Bidding and Contract Negotiations
- Construction Phase – Office
- Construction Phase – Site
- Project Management

**Note** Except for Section 2 related to the National Building Code, the Intern will not be permitted to have any books, notes or reference material at the examination. For the National Building Code section, the Intern will be permitted to bring into the examination room only a paper format of the National Building Code of Canada (2015 Edition), without the provincial adaptations. Interns who use any Building Code other than the specified National Building Code do so at their own risk.

### THE PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF THE EXAMINATION CONTENT ARE THE:

- Canadian Handbook of Practice for Architects (CHOP), 2009;
- Internship in Architecture Program (IAP);
- National Building Code of Canada, 2015 Edition (without the provincial adaptations).

### STUDY GUIDE FOR THE ExAC

The ExAC is an experience based examination where the questions are generated using a set of General and Specific Objectives. Interns should refer to this document and familiarize themselves with these objectives while preparing for the ExAC. There is no preparation course or study guide approved by the ExAC committee. Interns participating in any program or workshop, or referring to any study guides produced by third parties, do so at their own risk and expense. Neither the Committee for the ExAC nor any of the Canadian Architectural Licensing Authorities shall be held responsible for any actions, claims or guarantees made by third party providers, whether expressed or implied.

For a listing of texts, documents and Internet links that will assist the Intern in preparing for the ExAC, refer to *Preparation - References and Resources* on the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca).

## QUESTION TYPES

# 04

The sections of the ExAC are composed of the following question types:

- Multiple Choice;
- Pairing/Matching of components;
- Placing steps/statements in order – sometimes combined with multiple choice;
- Sentence Completion/Fill in the Blank;
- Short Answer.

Examples of question types are posted on the ExAC Web site located at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca).

## LANGUAGE AND UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

# 05

The ExAC is a metric exam. however some references provided during the examination may be in Imperial units.

Interns have the option of writing the ExAC in either English or French. Interns will receive the examination booklet only in the language chosen on his/her registration form.

**Note** *It is important to be fluent in the chosen language. The use of a dictionary or a translation device is not allowed.*

## DELIVERY

# 06

The ExAC is delivered once each year simultaneously across Canada.

The ExAC is delivered in four one-half day sessions over a period of two consecutive days. Dates are set out on the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca).

The ExAC is a pencil and paper examination.

The ExAC will be administered in each province/territory of Canada listed at the beginning of this guide.

The ExAC may be offered in multiple locations in various provinces, subject to each Licensing Authority's specific requirements.

All Interns writing the ExAC **for the first time are required to register and take all four sections** over the period of two consecutive days.

All Interns must register for the ExAC in the jurisdiction in which he/she is an Intern.

All Interns may write the ExAC in any location in Canada where a Licensing Authority offers the examination.

**Note** *An Intern located in Yukon or Nunavut should contact one of the Licensing Authorities listed on the ExAC Registration Form.*

## ELIGIBILITY

07

To be eligible to register for the ExAC:

1. You must hold **Intern status** with one of the Canadian Architectural Licensing Authorities and be in good standing (ie. not be the subject of a complaint or disciplinary proceeding or hold Provisional CACB certification) and;
2. You must have recorded hours in the Canadian Experience Record Book (CERB) and submitted them for review and approval and;
3. A minimum of **2800 hours** must be approved. You will not be officially registered for ExAC without 2800 hours of approved experience and;

**Note** *The deadline to submit experience hours and your 2020 ExAC registration form is September 15th, 2020. Hours submitted after this date will still be reviewed by your Licensing Authority but cannot be reviewed in time in order for these hours to be considered toward your 2800 hour requirement necessary to sit for the 2020 ExAC.*

4. You must complete and submit the *Registration Form* and pay the fee.

## REGISTRATION PERIOD AND PROCEDURES

08

The ExAC registration period will open and close as noted on the ExAC website at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca). The ExAC Registration Form, attachments and payment must be received by the Licensing Authority location by 12:00 (noon, local time) on the last day of the registration period. Within 30 days of receiving an Intern's application, the Licensing Authority will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement. At least two weeks prior to the examination date, Interns will receive a Letter of Authorization advising them of the date, time and location of the examination venue.

## FEES

09

The cost for the four sections is set out on the ExAC Registration Form located on the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca).

All fees must accompany the ExAC Registration Form and are payable to the Intern's Licensing Authority whether or not the ExAC administration is being hosted by another Licensing Authority.

Methods of acceptable payments are at the discretion of the Intern's Licensing Authority. The ExAC Registration Form indicates a credit card payment option. It is recommended that Interns review the FAQ section on the ExAC website regarding acceptable methods of payment to their Licensing Authority.



## PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION AT ExAC

# 10

At the examination location, Interns must provide valid official government photo identification (ID) with signatures. Acceptable ID includes a passport, driver's license or Canadian citizenship card. The Intern must also bring his/her Letter of Authorization to write the ExAC.

**Note** Interns will **not** be admitted to the examination room without the proper form of identification. Supervisor/Invigilator will visually verify if the person is the same as the one appearing on the ID photo. Visual identity verification may be conducted by a male or female Supervisor/Invigilator.

## AT THE EXAMINATION

# 11

The Intern should arrive at the examination location at least **30 minutes** before the commencement of the examination to allow for administrative procedures.

Late arrivals will not be permitted entry to the examination room while exam instructions are being given, and no additional time will be added to the examination. Entry will only be provided for 30 minutes after the examination begins.

The Intern must remain in his/her seat during the examination, except when authorized to leave by the Supervisor/Invigilator.

The Intern must bring his/her own **HB pencils**. **It is the Intern's responsibility to make sure to use HB pencils. HB pencil is the only one guaranteed to work on the Answer-Sheet.**

The Intern must raise his/her hand to notify the Supervisor/Invigilator if he/she needs additional scratch paper or to go to the washroom.

All electronic devices, (including but not limited to portable music devices, smartphones, tablets and laptops) **must be turned off and placed** in the Intern's purse, briefcase, knapsack etc. None of these devices may be used during the examination, whether in the examination room or on a bathroom break.

**Note** At the conclusion of the examination, before each Intern is permitted to leave the room, the Supervisor/Invigilator will collect each Intern's Question Booklet, Answer Sheet(s), Appendix (if any), envelope and scratch paper.

## ALLOWABLE ITEMS AT THE ExAC

# 12

### FOR ALL FOUR SECTIONS OF THE EXAC:

- **Calculator** – Only a basic calculator that is non-programmable, non-communicating, and non-printing is allowed. It must not have preloaded formulas or have the capacity to store formulas, store and/or send or receive text. The Supervisor/Invigilator may note the type of calculator used and fill an Incident Report that could lead to the examination results being voided. You may not use the calculator on a personal electronic device.
- **Wallets, purses, briefcases, knapsacks, electronic devices (including but not limited to portable music devices, smartphones, tablets and laptops) and other personal items** – These items may be brought into the examination room but must be stowed under the Intern’s desk/table at which the examination is written and can only be accessed with the permission of the Supervisor/Invigilator. Any attempt by Interns to access books, study material, notes, etc. during the examination is prohibited. All electronic devices must be turned off and placed in the Intern’s purse, briefcase, knapsack, etc. In the case of any unauthorized accessing or use of the items listed here, an Incident Report will be filed and may lead to the examination results being voided.
- **Beverage** – Only water is allowed in the examination room, except in the case of approvals granted through a Special Accommodation request.
- **Paper tissues** – Must be kept in a transparent package/plastic bag.
- **Watch or silent travel clock.**
- **HB Pencils, eraser, small pencil sharpener** – without pencil-case, except if it is transparent.

**Note** You must **use an HB pencil**. The use of another kind of pencil will **invalidate** the scoring of your examination.

### FOR THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE SECTION OF THE ExAC:

For the National Building Code section only (Section 2), Interns are permitted to bring only a paper format of the *National Building Code of Canada* (2015 Edition), without the provincial adaptations, into the examination room for use in answering the questions. Only a paper format of the National Building Code may be used. The Intern has the responsibility to make sure that his/her paper format of the Code **does not contravene the Canadian Copyright Act**. Please note that it is not possible to print the electronic version of the Code (PDF format).

**Note** Interns who use any Building Code other than the specified National Building Code do so at their own risk.

The paper format of the National Building Code brought into the examination room may contain hand-written annotations and be tabbed. Interns are not permitted to add pages to their National Building Code: no additional references, indexes, matrixes or notes may be added by additional pages to the National Building Code. If the additional pages are found during the administration of the examination they will be confiscated by the test Supervisor/Invigilator. **While in the examination room, however, an Intern may not make any hand-written notations or markings of any kind in his/her copy of the National Building Code.**



### PROHIBITED ITEMS AT THE ExAC

# 13

- A dictionary or thesaurus of any type that aids in word definition or language translation;
- Scratch paper (it will be included in the exam package);
- Headphones (earplugs are permitted);
- Food/candy, except in the case of approvals granted through a Special Accommodation request.

Examination Supervisors/Invigilators reserve the right to confiscate any materials/aids not in compliance with the Preparation Guide for the ExAC.

### SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION AT THE ExAC

# 14

Any Intern who requires Special Accommodation at the examination must obtain prior approval from his/her Licensing Authority. Please indicate this requirement on the ExAC Registration Form.

The Intern must provide a specific diagnosis by an appropriately licensed professional that includes a description of the accommodations that are appropriate to the Intern's condition.

If an Intern arrives at the examination location and has not received such approval from his/her Licensing Authority, he/she will not be admitted as an Intern requiring Special Accommodation.

### CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION

# 15

All requests for cancellation of registration must be in writing. If a written request is received:

- **More than twenty-one days** prior to the examination the Intern will receive a refund of 75% of examination fees paid. Within twenty-one days prior to the examination there will be no refund.
- **Within twenty-one days** prior to the examination there will be no refund. For an Intern who is registered but is absent at an examination, that section is considered a fail. Where it is determined that an Intern is unable to write all or a portion of the four sections of the ExAC as a result of Exceptional Circumstances, details must be provided in writing within 30 days after the examination session to the Intern's local ExAC Administrator. The National Committee will be responsible for considering these requests. Should the Committee for the ExAC concur with the Exceptional Circumstances, the Intern will be provided a full refund for the section(s) not taken and the overall time within which the ExAC must be completed will be extended by one additional writing of the ExAC (see Section 18).

Exceptional Circumstances may include death in family, personal illness or unforeseeable difficulty. Work related scheduling issues will not be accepted as Exceptional Circumstances.

The examination will proceed as scheduled regardless of weather conditions. Interns are responsible to make arrangements to arrive at test sites as the scheduled dates and time. Refunds will not be issued to those failing to attend the examination on the dates and time indicated because of weather conditions.

## REPORTING RESULTS

# 16

The examination results will be mailed to Interns by mid-February 2021 in the form of an ExAC Transcript issued by his/her Licensing Authority. The results for each section of the ExAC will be identified as pass or fail. The examinee will not receive a score or a percentage. In the case of a fail score, examinees will be informed of the General Objectives they will need to focus on, as the results indicate that the intern did not perform adequately in these areas. No further details will be provided to examinees.

**Note** *A cut score is used to identify pass/fail results and is determined by a panel of Architects with the examination consultants after the administration of the examination. The consultants employ various statistical models, designs and analyses for the determination of cut scores and to ensure that it is valid and reliable. The cut score is not published.*

For additional information, refer to the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca).

## REQUEST FOR REVIEW

# 17

For Interns who do not successfully complete the ExAC, a formal review procedure is available for the section(s) that they wrote that year. On receipt of a formal Request for Review, the Committee for the ExAC will review the examination and advise the Intern of the results. The decision of the review is final.

A Review Fee will apply to any Intern wishing his/her examination reviewed. If successful, the Review Fee will be refunded.

An Intern may make a Request for Review of a failed examination provided that the request is:

- In writing;
- Accompanied by the required \$300 fee (plus applicable taxes);
- Submitted to his/her home Licensing Authority;
- Received by his/her home Licensing Authority within 45 days of the mailing of notification (the ExAC Transcript) to the Intern.

In situations where there were circumstances or factors negatively impacting on the Intern's performance which were not reported at the time of the examination or concerns raised were not resolved to the satisfaction of the Intern a formal Request for Review may also be submitted. In the 30 days following the examination session, the Intern must write a letter to his/her Licensing Authority with explanations about the circumstances.

## RETAKING THE ExAC

# 18

**Interns are given three consecutive attempts to achieve a pass on all four sections of the ExAC.** During the initial attempt if an Intern does not successfully pass all the sections of the examination he/she must register and rewrite **all** the failed section(s) at the next session of the ExAC. If he/she fails to succeed at this first retaking, he/she will be offered a **final attempt** to complete all the remaining failed section(s) at the next session of the ExAC. If the Intern fails to achieve a pass on all sections of the examination at this final attempt, he/she will be considered a new candidate for the examination and he/she will therefore have to rewrite all the sections of the examination as a First Time Applicant.

**Note** For an Intern who is registered but is absent at an examination (or who does not register to rewrite a failed section), that section is considered a fail.

## SECURITY PROTOCOL AT THE ExAC

# 19

To ensure the integrity of the ExAC, specific security measures are enforced during the examination:

- No portion of the ExAC can be copied or removed from the examination location.
- The contents of the ExAC Envelope include:
  - Multiple Choice Question Booklet;
  - Appendix (if any);
  - Multiple Choice Answer Sheet;
  - Short Answer Booklet (if any);
  - Scratch paper.

**Note** At the conclusion of the examination, before each Intern is permitted to leave the room, the Supervisor/Invigilator will collect each Intern's Question Booklet, Appendix (if any) and Answer Sheet in addition to the ExAC envelope containing scrap paper.

An Intern will not be permitted to leave the examination room within the final 30 minutes of the examination until all ExAC material has been collected from all Interns.

No electronic devices, (including but limited to portable music devices, smartphones, tablets and laptops) are permitted to be used while the Intern is in the examination room or during any breaks.

An Intern will not be permitted to leave the examination room for any purpose other than for a washroom break or illness during which he/she will be accompanied by a Supervisor/Invigilator.

## CONDUCT

# 20

This is a professional examination and Interns are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at the examination.

Supervisors/Invigilators are authorized to observe and monitor Interns' behaviour during the examination.

If Interns are observed communicating in any way or viewing another Intern's paper during the examination, they will be permitted to complete the examination but they will be advised that the Supervisors/Invigilators will file an Incident Report with the Committee for the ExAC.

Any cheating and/or attempts to disclose the substance of the ExAC items or content before, during and/or following the examination will be dealt with by the Committee for the ExAC. Such action may include:

- Suspension of future ExAC privileges pending resolution of the matter;
- All examination results invalidated;
- Legal procedures.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

# 21

Each Intern will be required to sign the following Confidentiality Agreement as part of the ExAC Registration Form.

### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT & COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT

I understand that the content of each section of the Examination for Architects in Canada (ExAC) is confidential and subject to Canadian copyright laws.

I agree that I will not divulge any question with respect to the ExAC to any individual or entity.

I agree that I will not participate in developing or delivering formalized ExAC preparation courses or study guides for a period of 5 (five) years after last writing any section of the ExAC.

I understand that the unauthorized possession, reproduction, or disclosure of any examination materials, including the nature or content of the examination questions, before, during, or after the examination by any method is in violation of law and this Confidentiality Agreement.

A violation of this Agreement can result in civil liability and/or action by the ExAC Committee.

I agree that, in the event that I violate this Confidentiality Agreement, the ExAC Committee may suspend my examination taking privileges, cancel my examination scores, and seek recovery in a court of law for costs and civil damages.

This Agreement does not prevent me from disclosing information related to the ExAC to my Licensing Authority.

I declare that I have read and will adhere to the conditions as set out in the ExAC Preparation Guide.

## EQUIVALENCY/TRANSITION

# 22

New ARE exemptions will not be granted and previous ARE exemptions are considered expired. There are no exemptions for passing sections of ARE.

## REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE ExAC

# 23

The Registration Form is located on the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca). The ExAC registration period closes at 12:00 (noon, local time) on the last day of the registration period. For further information, refer to Section 8 of this guide book and the ExAC website.

## GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

# 24

The General and Specific Objectives are located on the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca). The ExAC is based upon General and Specific Objectives which define the areas and levels of knowledge of the architectural profession which are measured to determine competency of the Intern. In preparation for the ExAC, Interns are encouraged to download the General and Specific Objectives from the ExAC website and use it as a study guide.

## REFERENCE/RESOURCES

# 25

The References/Resources can be located on the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca). The list of documents and Internet links will assist you in preparing for the ExAC. The ExAC committee does not guarantee the availability of all cited references and resources.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

# 26

If you have questions related to the ExAC, visit the ExAC Web site at [www.exac.ca](http://www.exac.ca) for Frequently Asked Questions or contact the ExAC Administrator at your Licensing Authority.



ExAC

Examination for Architects in Canada  
Examen des architectes du Canada

© Committee for the ExAC  
Comité de l'ExAC  
May 2020

