

# IDEP

## Interior Design Experience Program

NCIDQ

**The Interior Design Experience Program (IDEP®) is a monitored, documented experience program administered by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ®) for entry-level interior designers.**

The career path of a professional interior designer involves formal education, supervised work experience and a qualifying examination. Work experience is required of candidates for the NCIDQ Examination. State licensing boards and provincial associations require proof of quality, diversified interior design experience for licensure and/or registration.

- Providing an instrument for quantifying work experience for licensing and future career opportunities.
- Developing career networking relationships between entry-level designers, work supervisors and experienced mentors.
- Preparing participants for the NCIDQ Examination.
- Enhancing the professionalism of the practice of interior design.

IDEP creates value for participants, employers and mentors by facilitating the development of competent interior designers who can provide exemplary interior design services and work as individuals or members of teams of professionals involved in the design of the built environment.

### Why Participate in IDEP?

IDEP provides a complete and balanced “curriculum” for the participant’s first years of work. It targets critical experience areas for the professional interior designer, regardless of design specialty area. The years of participation required depends on the length of your design education (see reverse for a detailed description of program hours). IDEP helps prepare you for the NCIDQ Examination and licensure/registration. It builds on your professional network through mentorship and greater workplace participation.

### Key Players in IDEP

The program supports you by giving you guidance from many viewpoints. The first key player in IDEP is you. The individuals who participate in IDEP are called “participants.” You are joined in this endeavor by “supervisors,” “mentors,” NCIDQ and in some instances by a U.S. regulatory board or Canadian provincial association.



### Your Supervisor

Your supervisor is your employer or immediate supervisor within your office. Your supervisor must be an NCIDQ Certificate holder or a licensed/registered interior designer or an architect who offers interior design services. Over the course of your participation in IDEP you may have more than one supervisor.

Your IDEP supervisor supports your career by:

- Enhancing communication with you through a structured program of assessing current skills and planning for future on-the-job learning.
- Tracking your development through various work experience categories.
- Promoting your professional development outside the scope of a typical employee’s everyday tasks.
- Supporting your commitment to becoming a licensed/registered professional.

### Your Mentor

Your mentor is an interior designer for whom you do not work. Your mentor will give you career advice as you move through the program. You should communicate with your mentor at least three times a year. Over the course of your participation in IDEP you may have more than one mentor. Your mentor must be an NCIDQ Certificate holder or a licensed/registered interior designer. Your mentor should be employed outside your firm or should have a non-supervisory relationship with you.

Your IDEP mentor supports your career by:

- Putting you in touch with interior designers who may have a different perspective of the profession.
- Giving you opportunities to learn through new ways of viewing challenges that you may encounter.

IDEP assists entry-level interior designers in obtaining a broad range of quality professional experience. The program provides a structure for the essential transition between formal education and professional practice, recognizing the differences between classroom and workplace.

The purpose of IDEP is to develop competency in interior design practice by:

- Promoting the acquisition of professional discipline, skills and knowledge.
- Validating experience through consistent documentation.

*(additional information on reverse side)*

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### NCIDQ

NCIDQ—the National Council for Interior Design Qualification—is available to assist you before, during and after your participation in IDEP. NCIDQ is composed of a staff in Washington, DC and dozens of volunteers located across North America. If you have any suggestions about the program, please send them to NCIDQ at [info@ncidq.org](mailto:info@ncidq.org).

The NCIDQ Customer Service staff is available during normal business hours to answer questions you might have about the program and to explain the requirements of the program. NCIDQ office hours are 9:00am to 5:00pm ET.

### Your State Board or Provincial Regulatory Association

There are many names for these entities, but in general a “regulatory board” is a legally constituted private or governmental organization that is charged with regulating the interior design profession and professionals within a jurisdiction. These boards may enact laws or regulations that require future licensed/registered professional interior designers to participate in IDEP before a license or registration will be granted. It is essential that you know the status of the laws in the state or province where you intend to practice.

### IDEP Participation

- Participation is voluntary in most jurisdictions, but state/provincial boards and employers may mandate enrollment in IDEP for verifiable, diversified interior design experience.
- You must find your own job; the program is not a placement service.
- You must complete a minimum of 3,520 hours if you possess a baccalaureate degree in an interior design program of no less than 120 semester or 180 quarter credit hours of which 60 semester or 90 quarter hours, respectively, are interior design-related; OR 5,280 hours if you possess a certificate, degree or diploma including no less than 60 semester or 90 quarter credit hours of interior design-related coursework. If your certificate, degree or diploma includes no less than 40 semester or 60 quarter credit hours, you may participate in IDEP, but you must complete an additional 1,760 hours of work experience to qualify for the NCIDQ Examination.
- The hours of experience are distributed among these six competency areas:
  - Programming
  - Schematic Design
  - Design Development
  - Contract Documents
  - Contract Administration
  - Professional Practice

- The definition of “experience” includes:

- Working directly in a competency area.
- Observing others who are engaged in such work.
- Attending lectures, seminars and continuing education courses. This type of post-degree educational experience can be used to fulfill no more than 10% of the total required hours.

### IDEP Log

Work experience is tracked via an online log. Your IDEP supervisor must verify the accuracy and completeness of your online log. Your supervisor must meet regularly with you to discuss and indicate approval of your work. Your mentor must consult with you regularly (in person, by phone or e-mail) to discuss your ongoing experience and alternatives, if needed, to fulfill the experience in the six competency areas.

*Note: Over the course of the program, you may have more than one employer, more than one supervisor and/or more than one mentor.*

A full-time employee can expect to complete the program in approximately two or three years, depending on the hours required for your formal education program level. Part-time employees may take longer to complete the program.

**Give your interior design career a running start!**

**Complete an IDEP Application online  
at [www.ncidq.org](http://www.ncidq.org) today!**



**National Council for  
Interior Design Qualification**