

What is an Architectural Registration Exam (ARE) Success Team?

We discovered that people were having problems taking the ARE because they felt isolated and unsupported. In contrast to the old days, when everyone took the exam at the same time of year, ARE candidates can now take the exams anytime. This leaves many without anyone to talk to about their progress, ask questions of, or offer support to.

We also discovered that people were not scheduling their exams in advance. In the old days, the twice-yearly exam periods provided a structure and a schedule. The ARE Success Teams encourage you to schedule at least half your exams in advance. This creates a structure that is lacking when you go it alone.

What is the goal of each Success Team?

Each participant will pass the ARE and become a licensed architect. Everyone in each group will continue to offer support to group members until every member of the group passes all his or her exams.

How do I join a Success Team?

AIA Eastern Oklahoma forms teams at their Intern Development Program (IDP) Boot Camps. Teams are formed on a first-come / first-served basis. Any and all candidates who are eligible to sit for the ARE and have received an authorization number, issued by Thomson Prometric, are welcome to attend. Contact Weldon Bowman, Assoc. AIA at Weldon@tannerbaitshop.com or 918.745.9929.

Can I join a Success Team before I've finished IDP? Before I've received a letter from the State? Before I've been authorized to test by Thomson Prometric?

NO. We ask for your authorization number from Thomson Prometric, which administers the exams, before you can join a Success Team. We have tried forming teams before they have finished all their paperwork with NCARB, the State, Prometric's Candidate Services (PCS), and Thomson Prometric, but have found that it can sometimes take several months before all the paperwork is complete. Therefore, we must know that you are eligible to take the exams before you can join a team.

However, you may submit your name now to AIA Eastern Oklahoma or Weldon Bowman, Assoc. AIA to express your interest in joining a future team. We will keep your name on an email list and notify you when the next team is established. Remember, you must have a Thomson Prometric authorization number.

How are Success Teams established?

We schedule a meeting for the first 8 people who sign up for at the IDP Boot Camp. At this meeting, we discuss the function and organization of the Success Teams, what AIA Eastern Oklahoma provides, and what is expected of each team members, as well as a proposed schedule. At that time, a team leader is appointed and you complete your ARE Success Team Member Application confirming that you will remain committed to your team and the process.

How many people are in a Success Team?

We recommend 6-8 and no more than 10. Any fewer than 6, you run the risk of being ineffective if people drop out. Over 10 people, it is difficult to schedule meetings and effectively communicate with team members.

How do I to navigate my way through the NCARB/ARE testing process?

Look for resource information on AIA Eastern Oklahoma's website at www.AIAeok.org. This information is maintained by the Oklahoma IDP State Coordinator, Daryl Bray, AIA.

How often should Success Teams meet?

Most groups will meet once before each exam. You may want to meet and then study, or you may want to study and then meet. You and your team members will make that decision. You may want to meet more often than before each exam. Or you may find that you and your team members need to change the frequency of meetings. You may find that a particular division of the exam requires extra meetings. Remain flexible.

What are my responsibilities as a member of a Success Team?

We ask you to sign a letter of commitment that you will, to the best of your ability, attend all meetings and take all divisions of the exam with the team. We ask that you make a commitment to the entire team for the whole process (ARE 3.1 or ARE 4.0) and that you support the other team members who do not pass a division of the exam until they do. The Success Team is not just to help you get through the exam, but also to support others at the same time.

Our meetings seem unfocused; what are we doing wrong?

Everyone must come on time. The meeting should be scheduled for a specific amount of time and end on time. We recommend starting out with one hour meetings. Your team may choose to adjust that upward or downward. Limit your socializing before the meeting. Start on time with a check-in for each member, then move on to any problems—administrative or academic—the team may be having. Finally, confirm your exam schedule, meeting schedule, and meeting location. If your meetings continue to be unfocused, we recommend making them shorter.

The rest of us can't stand one person in the group; can we kick him/her out?

If you don't like his/her personality, but he/she is keeping up with the group, we ask that everyone work to keep the original team together. Remember, with 9 (or 7) divisions of the exam, you'll probably be meeting that number of times. Try to work through it.

One person in the group is not consistently coming to meetings and/or has not taken all of his/her exams. Should we kick him/her out?

Each member should have signed a commitment form to attend all meetings and take all of the exams. Life and work do get in the way, however, and sometimes members will have to miss meetings or skip exams due to outside pressures. However, members should notify the team in advance of any problems. If this is a chronic problem (more than 3 meetings/exams missed), then the team should ask this person to leave the group. We may be able to put him or her into another group with a less aggressive schedule.

One person always comes late to meetings; how do we handle this?

Ask him/her or her to be on time, reschedule the meetings to suit his/her schedule, or ask the person to find another group. Being on time is critical. Everyone's time is precious, and the group should not have to repeat everything for the late person. On the other hand, the meeting time should work for everyone's schedule, so find another time if this one doesn't work.

Should we be studying during our meeting?

If you want to study together, do so after your check-in and planning period. The meetings are intended for monitoring and maintaining structure for the team. Each person should say where they are in the process, if they had problems registering, if they have to skip or reschedule an exam, etc. Take care of all these issues first, then plan future meetings and exams as needed.

You may want to study as a group afterward. Or maybe only a few people want to study together. Whatever you decide, don't sacrifice your check-in and support time for study time.

Are we allowed to tell our team members what is on the upcoming exams?

You are not allowed to tell others specific questions on the exams. This violates the confidentiality oath you take at the beginning of each exam and seriously compromises the results for all ARE candidates. You may, however, discuss the broad subjects that the exam covers, for example, "You should know what life-cycle cost analysis is." It is then up to each candidate to study that section.

Couldn't we skip our meetings and just do our check-in by email?

We do not recommend this. One of the things that makes it difficult for candidates to complete the exam is the sense of isolation we feel now that the exams are not given at one time. The success teams specifically address this isolation by creating a community of peers. As humans, we need actual contact to feel a real connection and commitment to each other.

I can't make a lot of the meetings, but I'm fine with whatever schedule the team comes up with. Can't I just skip the meetings?

No. You are not on the team solely for yourself. By not coming to meetings, you are depriving your team of your knowledge and energy. You are disrupting the commitment the team is creating. You would probably be better off taking the exams on your own.

How long does it take to pass the exams?

You and your group will determine how frequently to take the exams and therefore how long it will take to complete all of them. As more people go through the process, we will gather statistics on the average length of time. Until then, you should estimate that the total process, including retaking exams, if necessary, will take about 1-1/2 years. It is possible to do it in far less time, and certainly in far more.

How often will I be taking an exam?

You and your group will determine the frequency of exams.

What sequence will I be taking the exams?

You and your group will determine the sequence of exams.

Are there some sequences that are better than others?

We don't have statistics on the "best" sequence. As more teams complete the process, we will ask for this information. Refer to www.AREForum.org to get up-to-date comments from your peers taking the exams.