

**CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS**

Hearing Date: **August 6, 2012**

Subject Matter of Proposed Regulation: **Examination Transition Plan**

Sections Affected: California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 16, Division 26, Section 2614
As a result of legislative reorganization, the Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC), established on January 1, 1998, replaced the former Board of Landscape Architects and was placed under the purview of the California Architects Board (Board). Business and Professions Code (BPC) section 5630 authorizes the Board to adopt, amend, or repeal rules and regulations that are reasonably necessary in order to carry out the provisions under the Landscape Architects Practice Act.

SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

Section 2614 – Examination Transition Plan

The Landscape Architect Registration Examination (LARE) is transitioning to a new examination format in September 2012. Currently, there is no transition plan in place to give examination credit to candidates who passed sections of the previously administered LARE to the current LARE format.

This proposal would amend section 2614 by adding subsections (f)(1) – (4), thus establishing a transition plan for those candidates who passed sections of previously administered landscape architect licensing examinations into the current LARE. The existing regulation sets forth the transition plan for previous sections of the licensing examination to the sections of the LARE through June 2012.

FACTUAL BASIS/RATIONALE

BPC section 5630 authorizes the Board to adopt, amend, or repeal rules and regulations that govern the examination of applicants for licenses to practice landscape architecture in California. BPC section 5650 describes the qualifications for eligibility for the licensing examination. BPC section 5651 requires that the Board administer a written examination that ascertains the professional qualifications of all applicants for licenses to practice landscape architecture. BPC section 5652 authorizes the LATC to issue a landscape architecture license upon successful completion of the licensing examination.

The Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB) is the national test vendor that supplies the LARE, the licensing examination, to the LATC. In September 2012, CLARB will implement modest structural changes to the LARE to better align the content of the LARE with current practice. The new exam will consist of four (1-4) rather than five (A-E) sections and will move to a fully computerized model. Candidates in the exam process who have

previously passed Sections C and D will receive transitional credit for Section 3. Candidates who have previously passed Sections D and E will receive transitional credit for Section 4. If a candidate passes either C or D but not both, the candidates must take and pass Section 3. If a candidate passes either D or E but not both, the candidate must take and pass Section 4.

According to CLARB the changes expected to take effect in September 2012 result from a recent task analysis research, advancements in testing technology, and evolution of the marketplace. The changes to the exam are provided by CLARB on attachments A-C and include the following:

- Minor content changes will be consistent with the current landscape architectural practice.
- The content will be presented through four rather than five sections to better align with current practice, but will not reduce the content currently tested.
- All sections will be delivered entirely by computer. CLARB's exam development committees are currently working on creating new computerized problems for the content currently tested in the graphic exams (Sections C and E) and Section D using a mix of multiple-choice questions and advanced item types. CLARB will not use CAD software; rather the candidate will interact with on-screen graphics.

The new LARE will have the following benefits:

- Increased uniformity to test practices
- Increased reliability of test results
- Increased relevance to modern practice
- Increased accessibility for candidates to take the examination

This proposal would modify CCR section 2614 to add new language necessary to be consistent with the transition plan used by CLARB as the new version of the LARE is launched in September 2012.

UNDERLYING DATA

CLARB September 2012 LARE Transition – Frequently Asked Questions
LARE Transition Chart

BUSINESS IMPACT

This regulation will not have a significant adverse economic impact on directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with business in other states, because it affects only candidates for examination and licensure.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC) does not license businesses or small businesses; rather, it licenses individuals practicing landscape architecture. Existing regulation

requires a candidate to take and pass the LARE prior to licensure. Businesses may only be impacted if they choose to pay the fees associated with taking the LARE to CLARB on the candidate's behalf, which may be the businesses' current practice under existing regulation. Businesses will not have an adverse economic impact as this amendment affects only candidates for examination and licensure. The Board does not know if most candidates are employed by small businesses and does not know how many landscape architectural firms are small businesses.

This regulatory proposal will have the following effects:

- It will not create or eliminate jobs within the State of California because it only affects candidates for examination and licensure.
- It will not create new business or eliminate existing businesses within the State of California because it only affects candidates for examination and licensure.
- It will not affect the expansion of businesses currently doing business within the State of California because it only affects candidates for examination and licensure.
- This regulatory proposal does not affect the health and welfare of California residents because it only affects candidates for examination and licensure.
- This regulatory proposal does not affect worker safety because it only affects candidates for examination and licensure.
- This regulatory proposal does not affect the state's environment because it only affects candidates for examination and licensure.

SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGIES OR EQUIPMENT

This regulation does not mandate the use of specific technologies or equipment.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The LATC did not consider other alternatives to the proposed regulation because this is the best way to carry out the transition plan needed to give examination credit to candidates who passed sections of the previously administered LARE to the current LARE format.

No reasonable alternative to the regulation would be either more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed regulation.



SEPTEMBER 2012 L.A.R.E. TRANSITION - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the exam changing?

Every five to seven years CLARB conducts an analysis of the practice of landscape architecture to ensure that what is tested on the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (L.A.R.E.) accurately reflects the knowledge and skills required to practice as a licensed professional.

As a result of this analysis, the L.A.R.E. is changing due to the evolution of practice, advancements in testing methods and to better address marketplace needs.

What is changing on the L.A.R.E.?

1. Five to four sections. - This modest structural change will better align the content of the L.A.R.E. with current practice, as demonstrated in the 2010 Task Analysis study.
2. Full computer based testing - By December 2012 all four sections will be delivered by computer to improve relevance, reliability, and accessibility.

I've already started taking the current sections of the L.A.R.E. – What should I do?

CLARB strongly encourages candidates already in the exam process to complete the current exam prior to September 2012. Because the content that is currently tested in Section D will be split between Sections 3 and 4 in the new exam, candidates already in the exam process should complete the current exam to avoid losing credit for Sections C, D or E.

- To achieve credit for Section 1, candidates must pass section A of the current exam.
- To achieve credit for Section 2, candidates must pass Section B of the current exam.
- To achieve credit for Section 3, candidates must pass Section C and Section D of the current exam.
- To achieve credit for Section 4, candidates must pass Section D and Section E of the current exam.

Candidates who complete all sections by June 2012 will also save money, as the new exam costs will increase as expenses will be spread over four sections

I'm a new candidate and I want to start taking the exam – What should I do?

Obtaining licensure as soon as possible is an important career goal that makes you a more marketable and mobile professional (especially helpful in this challenging economy). New candidates are encouraged to begin the exam process as soon as possible to obtain licensure. If you start now, there is ample time to complete the current exam and become licensed prior to the transition to the new exam in September 2012.

If I've already passed all sections of the current exam, will I have to take the new exam?

Candidates who have already passed the current L.A.R.E. will not have to take any portion of the new exam. Licensure requirements state that passage of the *current* exam is required for initial licensure.

How long do I have to complete the current exam sections?

CLARB wants to ensure that candidates have ample time to complete the current sections of the L.A.R.E. The current exam will be offered for a full year (see schedule below) prior to implementing the new exam in September 2012.

Section	Administration Schedule
Section A – Project and Construction Administration	September 2011 March 2012
Section B – Inventory, Analysis and Program Development	September 2011 March 2012
Section C – Site Design	December 2011 June 2012
Section D – Design and Construction Documentation	September 2011 March 2012
Section E – Grading, Drainage and Stormwater Management	December 2011 June 2012

When will the new exam sections be administered?

Section	Administration Schedule
Section 1 – Project and Construction Management	September 2012
Section 2 – Inventory and Analysis	September 2012
Section 3 – Design	December 2012
Section 4 – Grading, Drainage and Construction Documentation	December 2012

What will the new computerized graphic exams look like?

CLARB's exam development committees are currently working on creating new computerized problems for the content currently tested in the graphic exams (Sections C and E) using a mix of multiple-choice questions and advanced item types. CLARB will not utilize software such as CAD, rather the candidate will interact with on-screen graphics. These new item types are being developed and examples will be available in the spring of 2012.

How much will the new exam sections cost?

The exact cost per section has not yet been determined; however, the cost per section will increase as the costs will be spread out over fewer sections. We expect pricing to be announced in spring 2012.

Will all sections of the new exam be administered at computer testing facilities?

Yes. All sections of the new exam will be administered at computerized testing centers across the U.S. and Canada.

If you have additional questions or need assistance:

- [Click here to email CLARB](#) or call CLARB at 571-432-0332.

The CLARB staff is available M-F 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time.

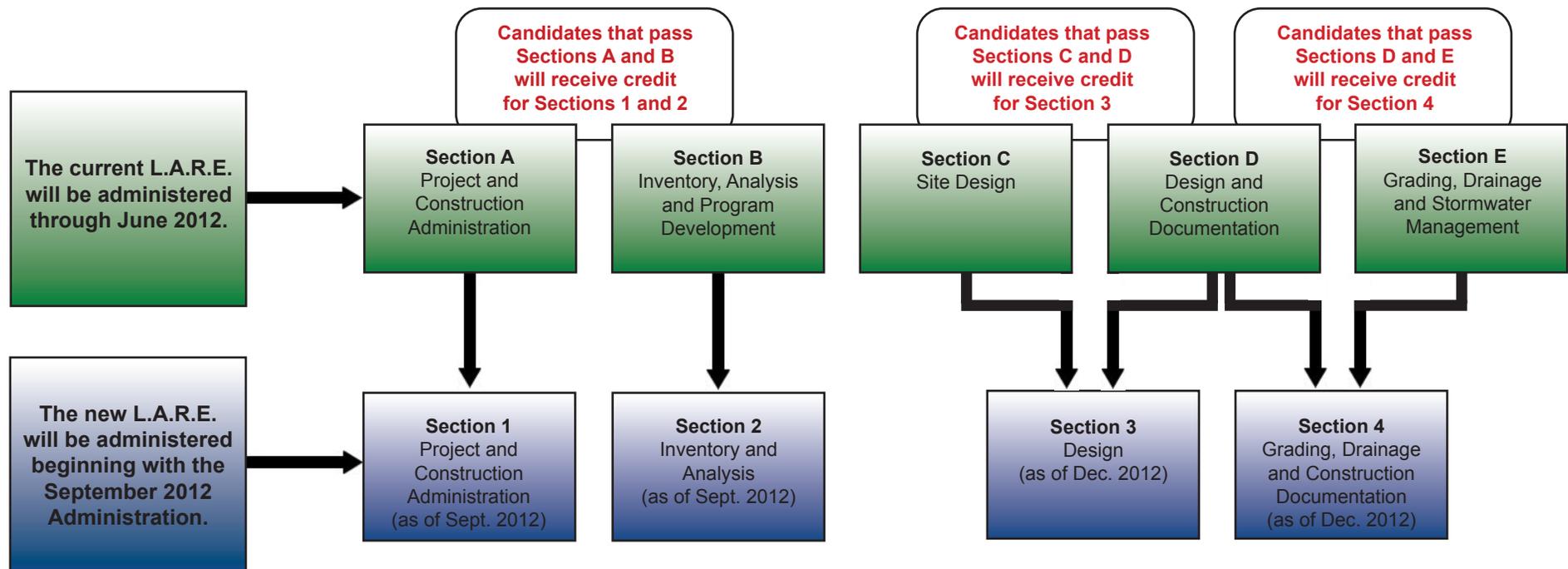


L.A.R.E. Transition Chart

Attachment B
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Following best professional testing practices, CLARB conducts an analysis of the practice of landscape architecture every five to seven years to ensure that what is tested on the Landscape Architect Registration Exam (L.A.R.E.) accurately reflects the knowledge and skills required to practice landscape architecture. As a result of the 2010 task analysis study, the following changes to the L.A.R.E. will take affect starting with the September 2012 administration.

Structural Changes: Modest structural changes will take place to better align the content of the L.A.R.E. with current practice. The new exam will consist of four rather than five sections and will be administered starting in September 2012. The chart below summarizes how the content will be organized in the new exam and how the current sections translate to the new exam.



Administration Changes: CLARB explored the best possible way to assess the L.A.R.E. content. Responding to changes in marketplace dynamics, advances in testing technologies, and a desire to offer the most relevant and defensible exam possible, CLARB will move to a fully computerized model for the delivery of the exam content to improve relevance and reliability.

Questions? Contact CLARB via email (info@clarb.org) or phone (571-432-0332).