



Council for
Interior Design
Qualification

Overview of the NCIDQ Exam



@NCIDQexam



CIDQ

NCIDQ
Examination

Why is NCIDQ Certification Important?

- Industry Standard
- Differentiator
- Recognized by nearly all regulated jurisdictions in North America
- Increased Salary Potential

Those with an NCIDQ certification reported a median salary of \$14,800 greater than those without.

SOURCE: IIDA INTERIOR DESIGN COMPENSATION REPORT 2021

What You Need to Know

IMPORTANT

Recent News

Exam
Information

- Basics and Exam Blueprints

Application
Process

- Eligibility Paths – Education + Work Experience

Dates,
Deadlines,
and Fees

Studying for
the Exams

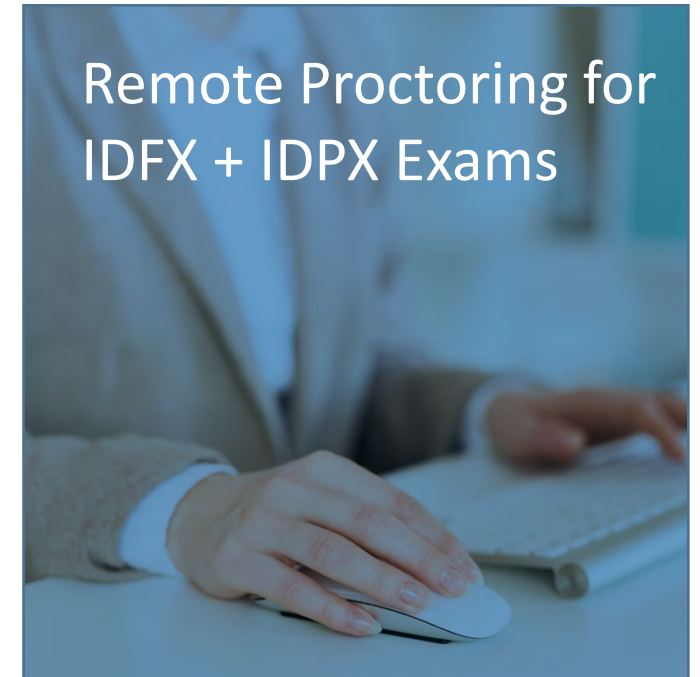
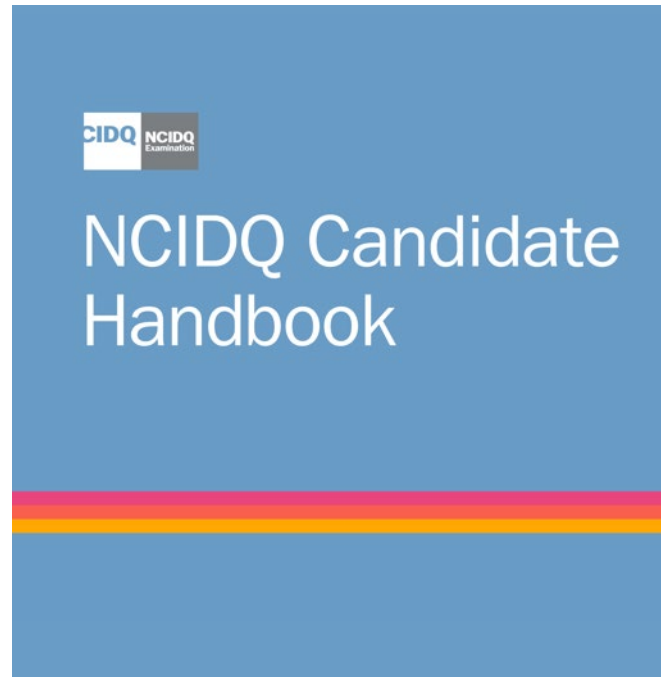
Scoring the
Exams

Certification

For all
information
and questions,
please visit
www.cidq.org.

News You Can Use

IMPORTANT



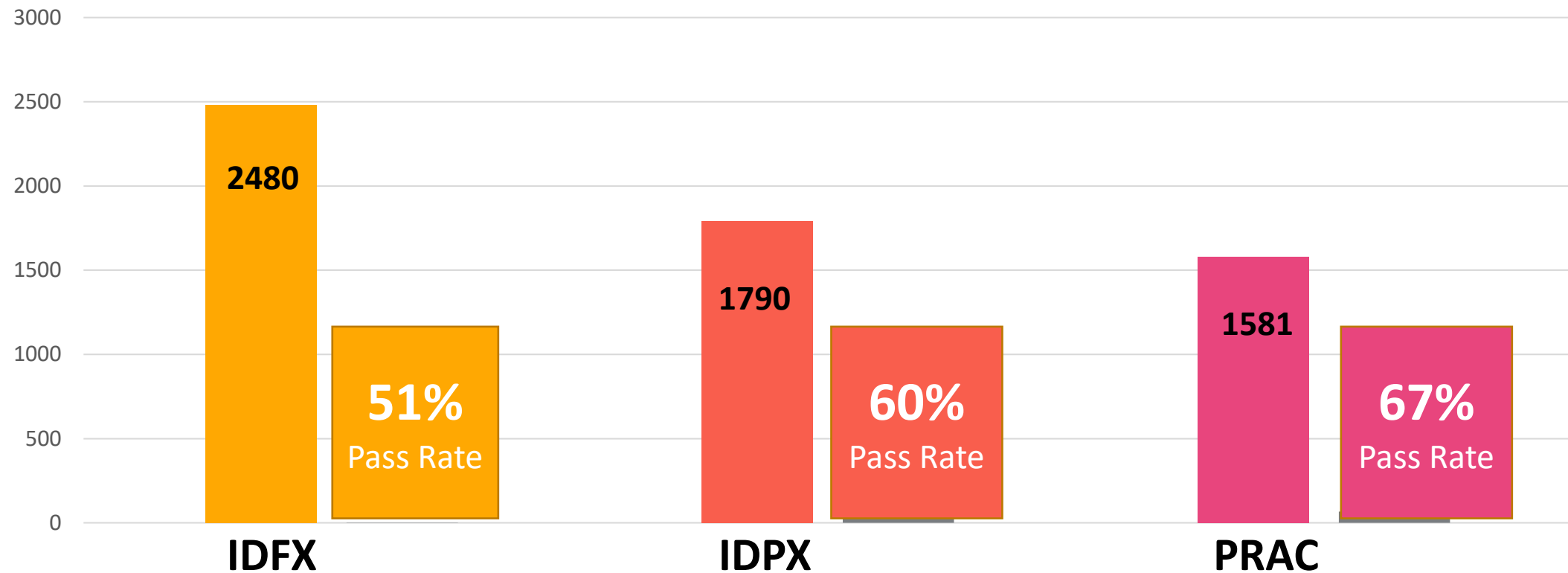
Exam Basics

The NCIDQ Exam consists of 3 separate sections

Exam Name	Format	Number of Questions	Duration
IDFX	Multiple Choice	125*	3 hours
IDPX	Multiple Choice	175*	4 hours
PRAC	Hot Spot, Drag and Place, Fill in the Blank	114*	4 hours

*The IDFX and IDPX exams contains 25 unscored pre- test questions.
The PRAC exam contains nine (9) unscored pre-test questions.

2024 Exams Administered + Passing Rates



IDFX

Fundamentals Exam

The **IDFX** exam covers the following content areas:



I. Programming and Site Analysis



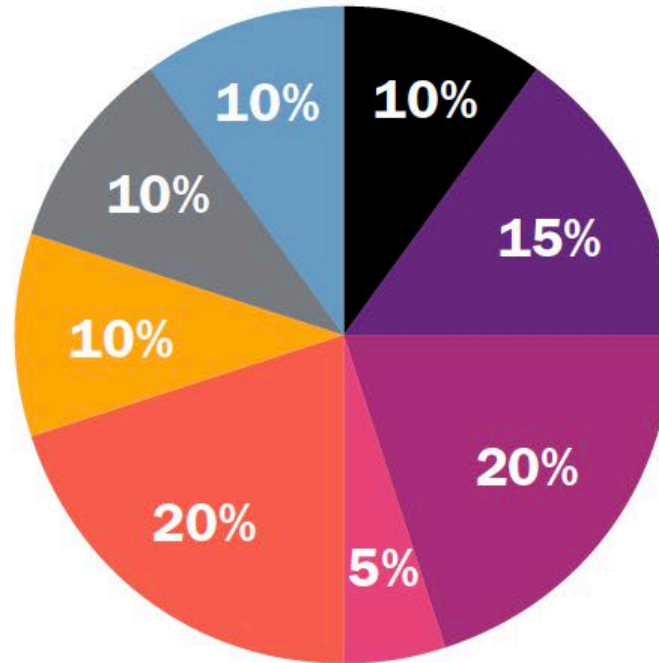
II. Relationship between Human Behavior and the Designed Environment



III. Design Communication Techniques



IV. Life Safety and Universal Design



V. Interior Building Materials and Finishes



VI. Technical Specifications for Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment and Lighting



VII. Construction Drawings, Schedules, and Specifications



VIII. Professional Development and Ethics

IDPX

Professional Exam

The **IDPX** exam covers the following content areas:



I. Project Assessment and Sustainability



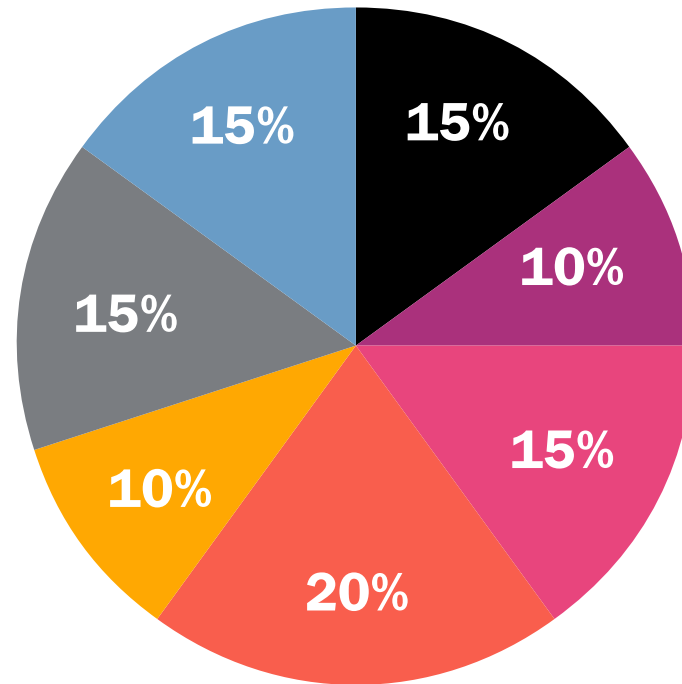
II. Project Process, Roles, and Coordination



III. Professional Business Practices



IV. Code Requirements, Laws, Standards, and Regulations



V. Integration with Building Systems and Construction



VI. Integration of Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment



VII. Contract Administration

PRAC

Practicum Exam

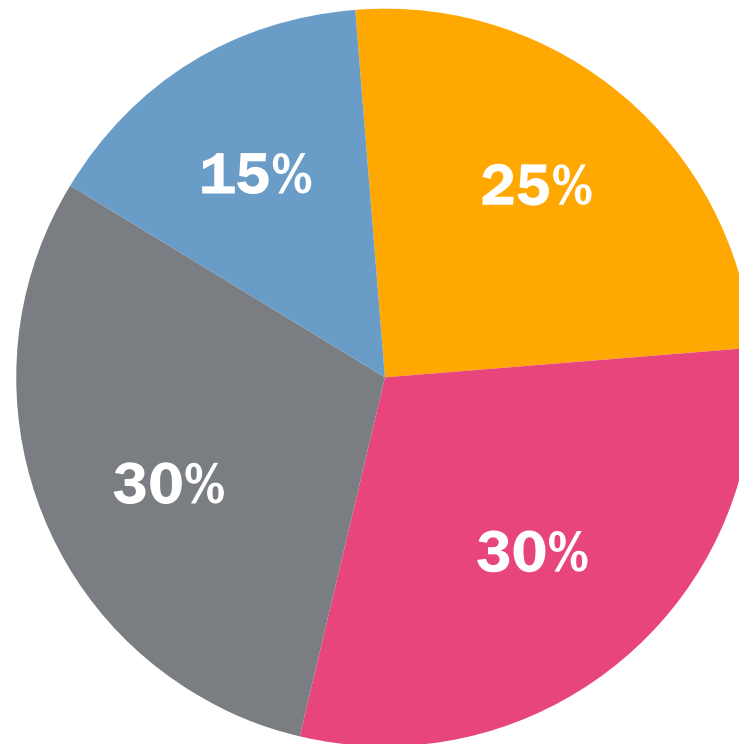
The **PRAC** exam covers the following content areas:



**I. Programming, Planning,
and Analysis**



**II. Code Requirements,
Laws, Standards, and
Regulations**



**III. Integration with Building
Systems and Construction**

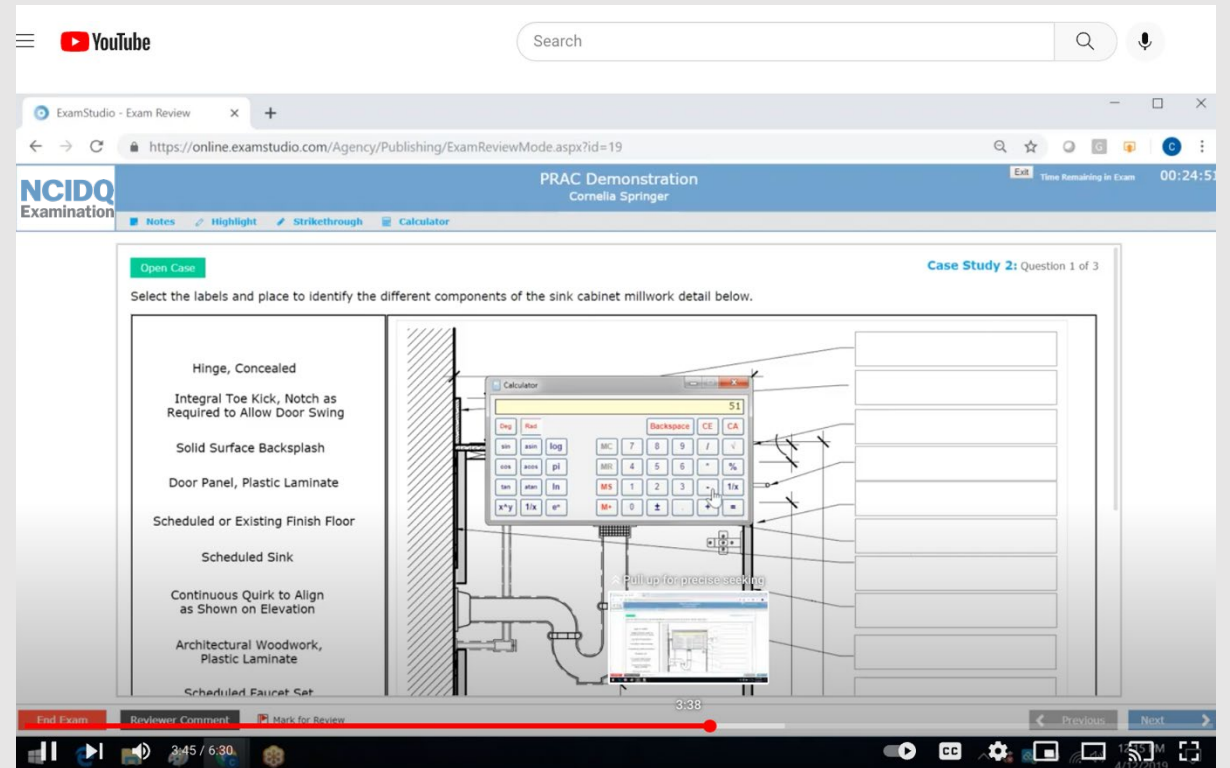


IV. Contract Documents

PRAC

Practicum Exam

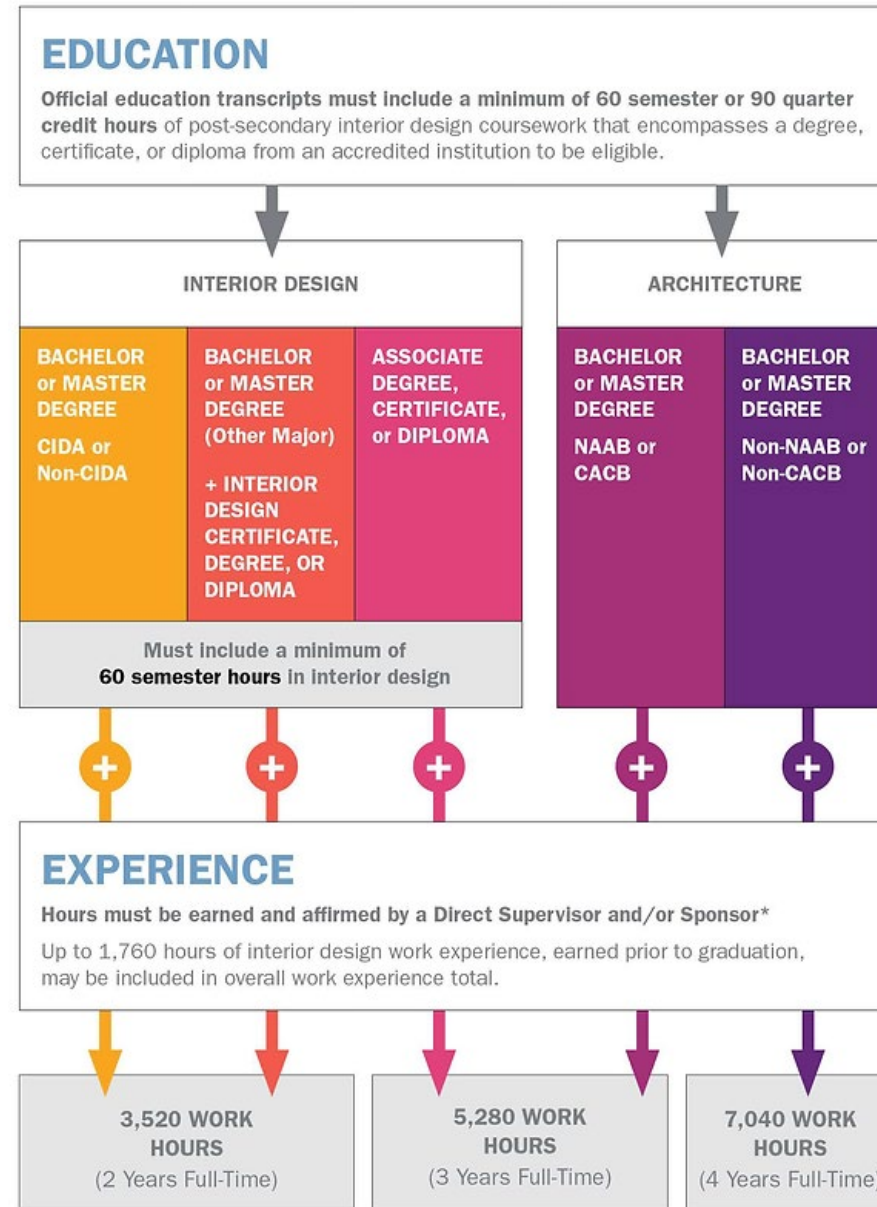
- No drawing
- Not software specific
- 114 total questions
- 4 hours in duration
- 3 separate case studies
(large commercial, small commercial, residential) with provided resources (tabs)



Demo available on YouTube: youtu.be/tOiw9Wll7cQ

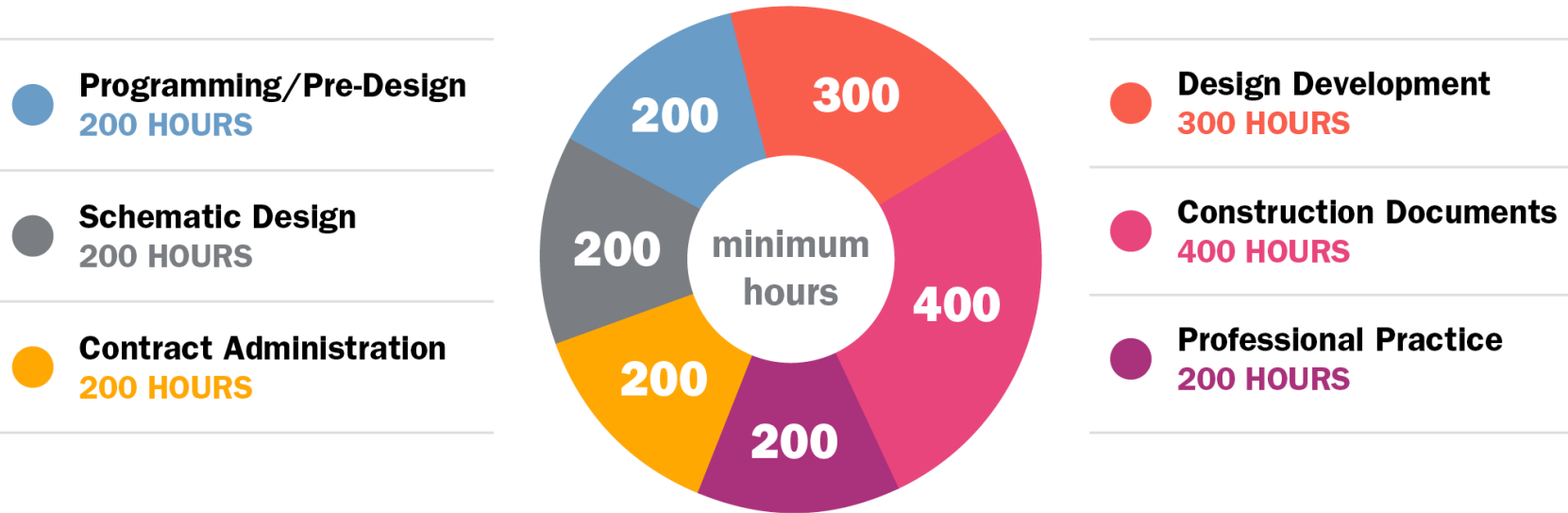
Eligibility Paths

For full eligibility paths and work experience requirements, visit www.cidq.org/paths.



Work Experience Requirements

Minimum hours will be required in each of the following categories for all candidates:



Application Requirements

NEW! APPLICATION VIDEO:
www.cidq.org/apply

IDFX ONLY

- Request school to email official transcript(s) to CIDQ directly at transcripts@cidq.org (preferred method) or mail in sealed, official transcript(s).
- Pay application fee and submit.

PLUS apply for IDPX/PRAC (*after approval of IDFX ONLY and completion of work experience*)

- Request school to email official transcript(s) to CIDQ directly at transcripts@cidq.org (preferred method) or mail in sealed, official transcript(s).
- Have work verification verified by a supervisor/sponsor who meets CIDQ requirements.
- Pay application fee and submit.

OR

All Three (3) Sections of Exam (IDFX, IDPX, PRAC)

- Request school to email official transcript(s) to CIDQ directly at transcripts@cidq.org (preferred method) or mail in sealed, official transcript(s).
- Have work verification verified by a supervisor/sponsor who meets CIDQ requirements.
- Pay application fee and submit.

Dates and Deadlines

	SPRING EXAMS	FALL EXAMS
Applications Accepted	August 1 – January 31 DEADLINE: JANUARY 31*	February 1 – July 31 DEADLINE: JULY 31*
Exam Payment & Scheduling Period	January 3 – March 31	July 1 – September 30
Exam Administration	April 1 – 30	October 1 – 31

*A complete application must be submitted by the application deadline date to be eligible for review for the upcoming exam administration.

Fees

Fees if Applying in Two Parts*

Application Fee**	Exams	Exam Fee	Exam Payment & Scheduling Period
\$95	IDFX	\$295	Spring: January 3 – March 31 Fall: July 1 – September 30
\$145	IDPX	\$355	
	PRAC	\$460	

Fees if Applying for all Three (3) Exam Sections

Application Fee**	Exams	Exam Fee	Exam Payment & Scheduling Period
\$225	IDFX	\$295	Spring: January 3 – March 31 Fall: July 1 – September 30
	IDPX	\$355	
	PRAC	\$460	

*Candidates who do not meet the work experience requirement and apply for the IDFX Only first must submit another application for the IDPX/PRAC once the work experience requirements have been met.

** All fees are payable in U.S. Dollars. Application fees are non-refundable. Payments are made through PayPal, the designated payment gateway, using candidate's MyNCIDQ account. We do not accept check payments.

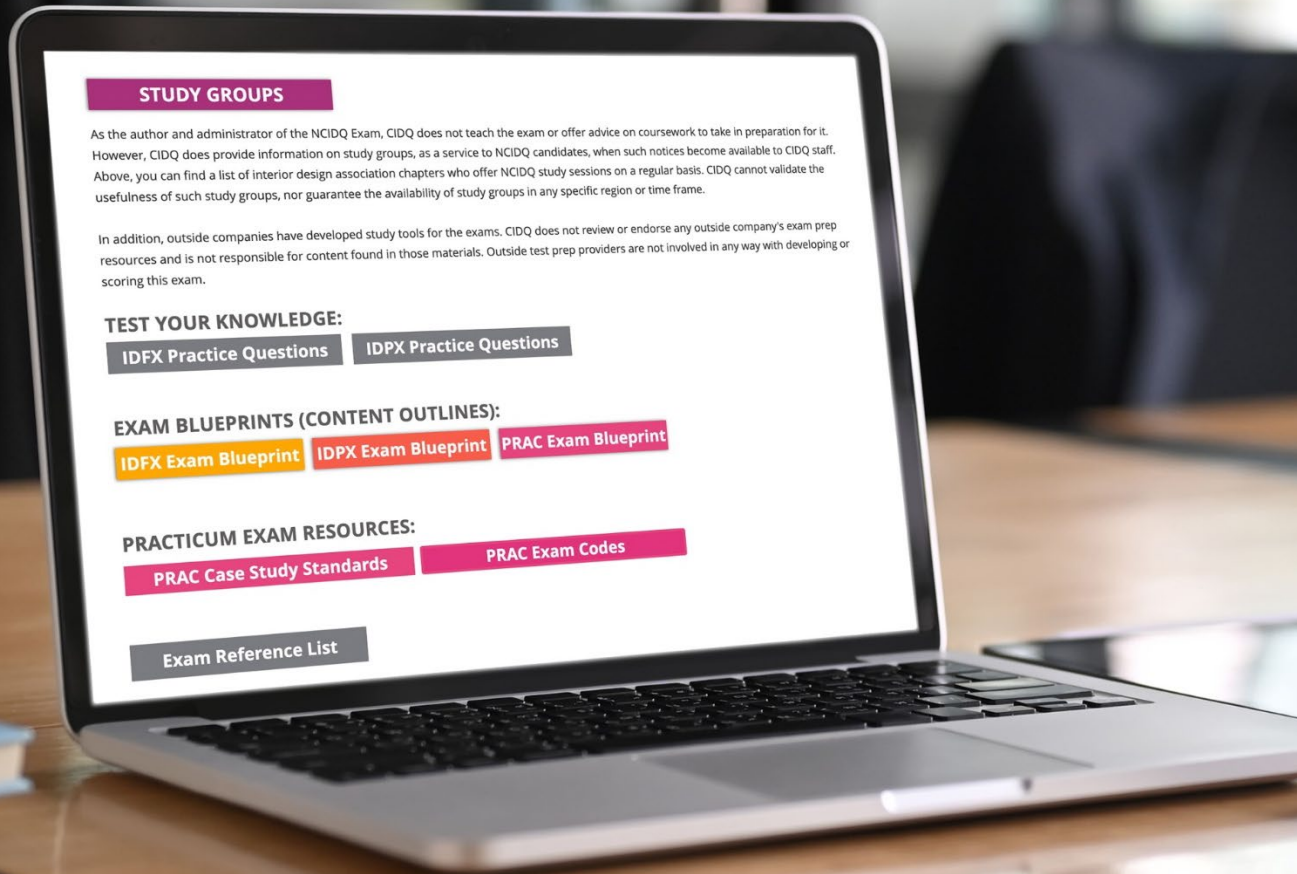
Fees Explained

- **Application Fee:** The fee paid to submit an application for review.
- **Exam Fee:** The fee paid to purchase an exam for the upcoming exam administration. Paying this fee allows an approved applicant to schedule an exam appointment for that exam administration.
 - Exam fees are only valid for the current exam administration only and do not carry forward.

Scheduling

- **Exams Administered:** April and October
- **Cancellation Fee:** \$100/exam
- **Rescheduling an Exam:** may be done for current administration only; fees do apply
- Unscheduled and uncanceled exams are subject to full forfeiture of exam fee.

Studying for the Exams



Online NCIDQ Exam Study Resources www.cidq.org/study

- Exam Blueprints (Content Outlines)
- IDFX & IDPX Practice Questions
- PRAC Exam Case Study Standards & Exam Codes
- Study Group Information

CIDQ does not teach the exam or offer advice on coursework to take in preparation for it nor does it review or endorse any outside company's exam prep resources.

Sample Preliminary Score Report

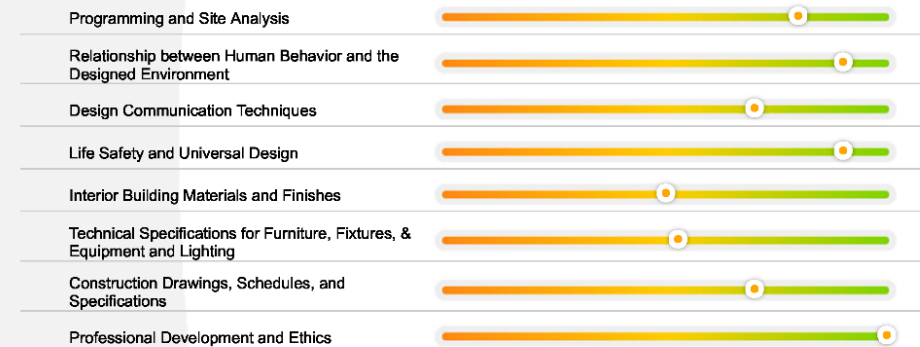


Test Date: Oct 01, 2021

Interior Design Fundamentals Exam

Congratulations! A preliminary analysis of your test results show that you successfully achieved the passing standard for the IDFX Examination. After the final quality control review of all scores has been performed, notification of the posting of your official examination results report, within your secure MyNCIDQ account, will be sent to you via email approximately 6 weeks after the close of the current exam window.

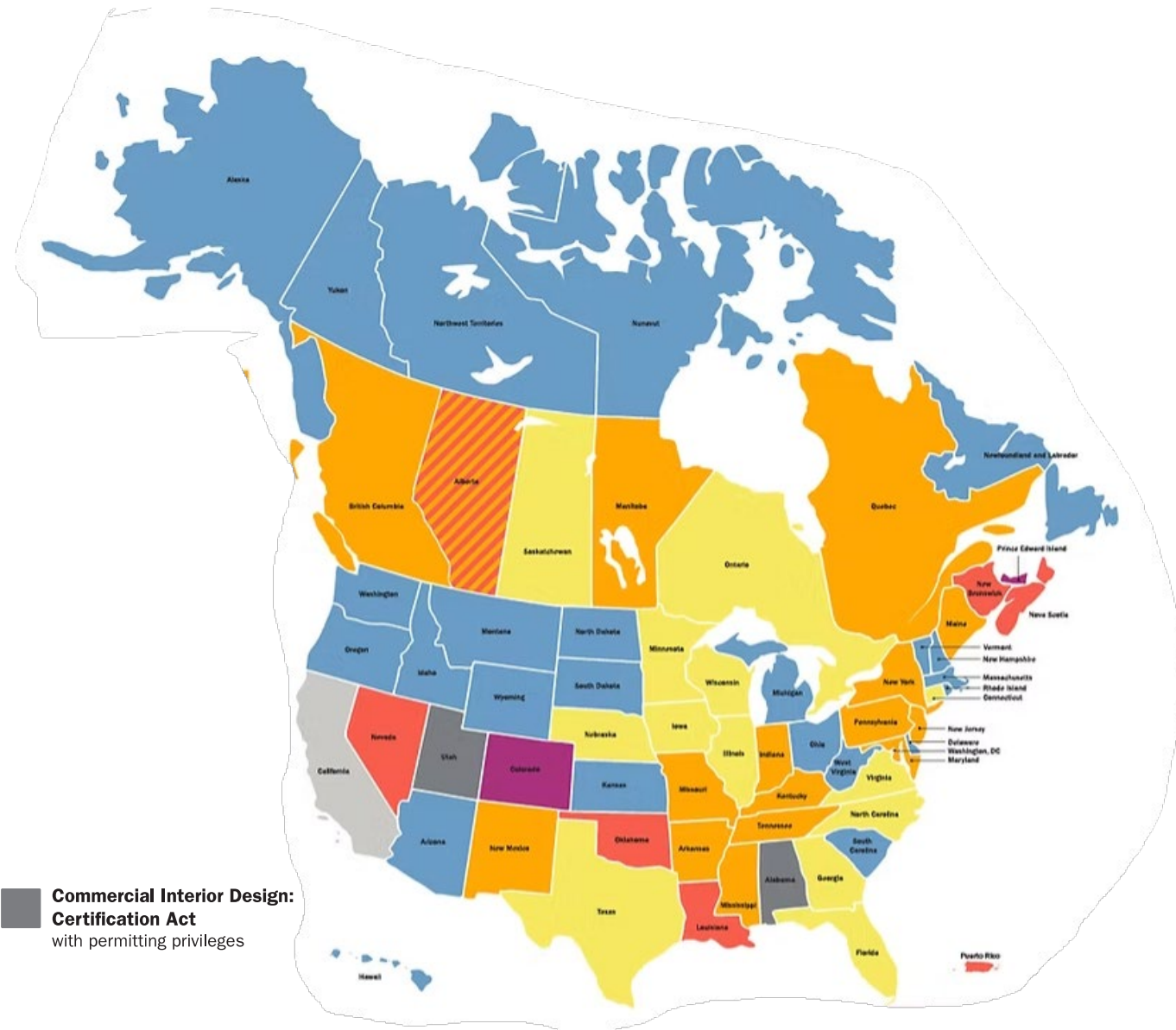
Your score is reported as a scaled score. The passing standard is 500. A diagnostic analysis of your performance in each domain/content area is shown below.



The NCIDQ Examination is comprised of three sections: 1) Interior Design Fundamentals Exam (IDFX), 2) Interior Design Professional Exam (IDPX), and 3) Practicum (PRAC). Candidates must pass all three sections of the exam in order to satisfy the NCIDQ Examination requirements and become NCIDQ Certified. For more information, visit www.cidq.org.

Be sure to check with your local jurisdiction to ensure you are in compliance with local laws and regulations.

 Title Act with no permitting privileges	 Title Act with state-specific credential	 No Legislation with permitting privileges
 Title Act with permitting privileges	 No Legislation no permitting privileges	 Practice Act with permitting privileges



Professional Organizations



Certification

Why it matters:

- Professionalism
- Prestige
- Opportunity
- Eligibility
- Leadership



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Questions???

NCIDQ Examination

BY THE COUNCIL FOR
INTERIOR DESIGN QUALIFICATION

Eligibility for Candidates Outside of the U.S. and Canada

Candidates with an interior design education (degree, certificate, or diploma) or Bachelor's degree (minimum) in architecture earned abroad may qualify for the NCIDQ Exam. These candidates must have their transcripts translated and evaluated by an education evaluator such as World Education Services or Education Credential Evaluators and may be eligible if the evaluation matches one of the eligibility paths. Submitted evaluations must include course titles with corresponding U.S. credit equivalency to ensure education meets CIDQ requirements of 60 semester credits of interior design coursework.

Alternative Review Process (ARP)

The Alternative Review Process is for candidates who are unable to document the minimum educational requirements. Candidates in Canada or the state of Nevada should contact the regulatory agencies in their jurisdiction prior to submitting an ARP application in order to comply with local.

Work Experience

Verification of work experience is required to sit for the IDPX and Practicum Exam sections.

NCIDQ Examination Eligibility Pathways

EDUCATION + EXPERIENCE

Specific education and work experience requirements exist to be eligible to sit for the NCIDQ Examination.

EDUCATION

Official education transcripts must include a minimum of 60 semester or 90 quarter credit hours of post-secondary interior design coursework that encompasses a degree, certificate, or diploma from an accredited institution to be eligible.

INTERIOR DESIGN

**BACHELOR
or MASTER
DEGREE**
CIDA or
Non-CIDA

**BACHELOR
or MASTER
DEGREE
(Other Major)**
+ INTERIOR
DESIGN
CERTIFICATE,
DEGREE, OR
DIPLOMA

**ASSOCIATE
DEGREE,
CERTIFICATE,
or DIPLOMA**

Must include a minimum of
60 semester hours in interior design

ARCHITECTURE

**BACHELOR
or MASTER
DEGREE**
NAAB or
CACB

**BACHELOR
or MASTER
DEGREE**
Non-NAAB or
Non-CACB

EXPERIENCE

Hours must be earned and affirmed by a Direct Supervisor and/or Sponsor*

Up to 1,760 hours of interior design work experience, earned prior to graduation, may be included in overall work experience total.

**3,520 WORK
HOURS**

(2 Years Full-Time)

**5,280 WORK
HOURS**

(3 Years Full-Time)

**7,040 WORK
HOURS**

(4 Years Full-Time)

Meeting CIDQ's education and work experience requirements does not guarantee that a candidate will meet their jurisdiction's requirements to be a licensed/registered/certified interior designer. Individuals are reminded to check with their jurisdiction regarding those specific requirements.

Qualified Work Experience Requirements

DIRECT SUPERVISOR/SPONSOR REQUIREMENTS

Who can be a Direct Supervisor and/or Sponsor?

A direct supervisor and/or sponsor must be a design professional, defined as someone who meets at least one of the following three criteria:

1. NCIDQ Certified Interior Designer
2. State/Provincial Licensed/Registered/Certified Interior Designer in the U.S. or Canada
3. State/Provincial Licensed/Registered Architect in the U.S. or Canada who provides interior design services

A **Direct Supervisor** is a design professional, as defined above, who provides substantial oversight and control of a candidate's work and possesses detailed knowledge of the tasks performed.

A **Sponsor** is a design professional, as defined above, who agrees to review a candidate's professional progress and affirm interior design work experience hours. A sponsor may or may not work within the same firm as the candidate.

Direct Supervisor/Sponsor — Candidate Relationship Expectations

CIDQ recommends the candidate meet quarterly with their direct supervisor and/or sponsor to discuss and review the candidate's work experience. Meetings must occur via phone, video chat, or in person; email-only is not sufficient. It is the responsibility of the candidate to schedule meetings with their direct supervisor/sponsor.

Conversations should focus on the phases of a design project, including those described below.

Successful candidates should have work experience and exposure in a variety of interior design areas to be well-rounded for professional practice. If the candidate is lacking experience in one or more areas, it would benefit them to gain more experience as they continue to improve their interior design knowledge and skills.

A sponsor must determine and be comfortable with the candidate's presented work, whether past or present. This may include a review of drawings and plans; photographs; project tours; and references, as examples.

Value For Work Hours	DIRECT SUPERVISOR	SPONSOR
NCIDQ Certified Interior Designer	100%	100%
State (U.S.) or Provincial (Canada) Licensed, Registered, or Certified Interior Designer	100%	100%
State (U.S.) or Provincial (Canada) Licensed or Registered Architect Who Provides Interior Design Services	100%	100%

WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

EFFECTIVE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED ON & AFTER FEBRUARY 1, 2024

Minimum hours will be required in each of the following categories for all candidates:



Total work experience hours needed remain unchanged.
Remaining hours required beyond these minimums may be earned in any of the above categories.

CONTACT US: INQUIRIES@CIDQ.ORG | 202.721.0220
VISIT US: CIDQ.ORG

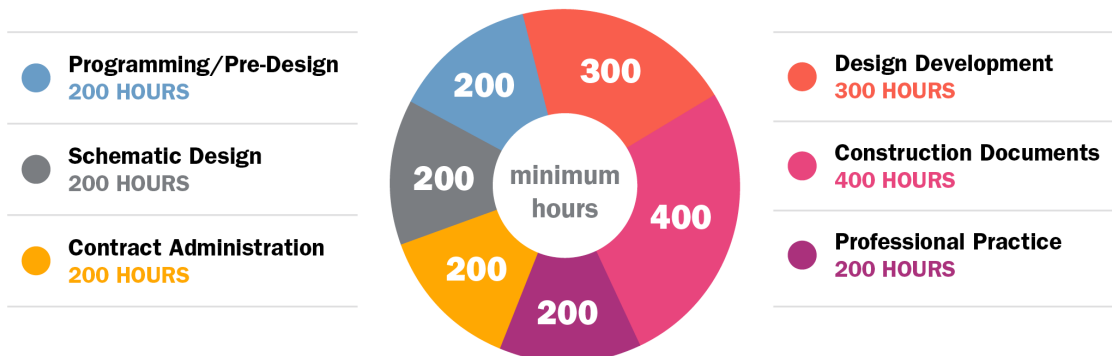
COUNCIL FOR INTERIOR DESIGN QUALIFICATION (CIDQ) 225 REINEKERS LANE SUITE 210 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

New Work Experience Requirements – Effective February 1, 2024

To be considered for NCIDQ eligibility, all work experience must be obtained within 10 years prior to the date of application submittal.

**EFFECTIVE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED
ON & AFTER FEBRUARY 1, 2024**

**Minimum hours will be required in each of the
following categories for all candidates:**



Total work experience hours needed remain unchanged.
Remaining hours required beyond these minimums may be earned in any of the above categories.

The tasks presented below under each work experience category are provided as **examples** and are not intended to be an exhaustive list. **Ultimately, the appropriateness of candidate task hour allocation into each category is a determination left to each candidate's supervisor or sponsor.**

- **Programming/Pre-Design = 200 hours minimum threshold**
 - Site Analysis
 - Existing conditions
 - Site observations
 - Client surveys
 - Project Assessment and Sustainability
 - Code requirements, laws, standards, and regulations

- Programming
- Project Goals and Schedules
- Data Collection and/or Research (project/client type research, determine applicable scope of work & stakeholders, sustainability/wellness requirements)
- **Schematic Design = 200 hours minimum threshold**
 - Relationship between human behavior and the designed environment
 - Space planning
 - Schematic level design presentation techniques
 - Conceptualization
 - Renderings
 - 3D visualization
- **Contract Administration = 200 hours minimum threshold**
 - Bidding/Tender Process
 - Communication techniques (e.g., memos, change orders, addendums, submittals/shop drawing review)
 - Site visits
- **Design Development = 300 hours minimum threshold**
 - Interior building materials and finishes/selections and materiality
 - Integration of furniture, fixtures, and equipment
 - Design Development level presentation techniques
- **Construction Documents = 400 hours minimum threshold**
 - Construction drawings, schedules, and technical material specifications
 - Life safety and universal design
 - Technical specifications for furniture, fixtures, equipment, and lighting
 - Code requirements, laws, standards, and regulations (compliance review)
 - Integration with building systems and construction
- **Professional Practice = 200 hours minimum threshold**
 - Professional development and ethics
 - Project Management
 - Communication techniques (e.g., contracts, meeting minutes)
 - Coordination - client, consultant, designers, vendors, GC, FF&E

NCIDQ Examination

NCIDQ Exam Blueprints 2026 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. [What is the primary difference between the new exam blueprints and the current \(2025\) exam blueprints?](#)
2. [What does “life safety” refer to in the new exam blueprints?](#)
3. [What does “universal design” refer to in the new exam blueprints?](#)
4. [What reference standards will be covered on the new NCIDQ exam?](#)
5. [In addition to IBC 2021, and the related 2017 Accessibility Code, are there any other Codes candidates will need to know?](#)
6. [Will CIDQ still utilize the IBC resource document in the IDIX \(formerly PRAC\) exam going forward?](#)
7. [Will BOMA be tested on future exams? I did not see it referenced on the new exam blueprints.](#)
8. [Will Professional Development and Ethics still be on the IDFX exam?](#)
9. [Will business structures be covered on any of the exams in the future?](#)
10. [Will the new IDIX \(formerly PRAC\) exam still include Case Studies?](#)
11. [How will the vignettes be presented on the exams?](#)
12. [Will students still be able to take the IDFX exam in their final year of a bachelor’s or master’s interior design degree program?](#)
13. [If a candidate has taken and passed one or two exam sections in 2025, will they have to retake that section\(s\) when the exam blueprints change?](#)
14. [Is there a particular order in which you should take the exams?](#)
15. [Will the IDFX & IDPX exams include images/exhibits on future exams?](#)
16. [Will there be other item types added in addition to multiple choice, drag and place, hot spot and fill in the blank?](#)
17. [Will candidates continue to receive preliminary exam results for the IDFX & IDPX exams?](#)
18. [Which exams will be offered remotely?](#)
19. [Will CIDQ be changing the number of exam administrations during which the exams will be offered with the roll out of the new exam blueprints?](#)
20. [Will there be any changes to the number of questions on the exams?](#)

Questions with Answers

1. What is the primary difference between the new exam blueprints and the current (2025) exam blueprints?

Each of the exams will be based on the tasks and associated knowledge areas of design as they pertain to health, safety and welfare (HSW), as noted below:

IDFX—Programming & Conceptual Design and Schematic Design

IDPX—Construction Administration and Project Management

IDIX (formerly PRAC)—Design Development and Construction Documentation

The current 2025 exam blueprints test on similar exam content, but at differing cognitive levels, such as recall, application and analysis.

2. What does “life safety” refer to in the new exam blueprints?

Life safety includes but is not limited to areas such as: accessibility, clearances, egress, fire alarms, fire separation, fire suppression, flammability, slip resistance, and toxicity.

3. What does “universal design” refer to in the new exam blueprints?

Universal design includes but is not limited to areas such as: ability level, accessibility, bariatric, barrier free, gender neutrality, geriatric, aging in place, inclusivity, neurodiversity, pediatric, and special needs.

4. What reference standards will be covered on the new NCIDQ exam?

Candidates must understand and know when certain standards need to be referenced including but not limited to ASHRAE, ASTM, BIFMA, ETL, OSHA, and UL.

5. In addition to IBC 2021, and the related 2017 Accessibility Code, are there any other Codes candidates will need to know?

Candidates will need to have conceptual knowledge of ANSI, NEC and NFPA and when these codes apply.

6. Will CIDQ still utilize the IBC resource document in the IDIX (formerly PRAC) exam going forward?

All three (3) exams will include an updated Code document which will refer to IBC 2021 and the related 2017 Accessibility Code. CIDQ will be posting a Table of Contents of the Code document a bit later this year including the specific Chapters and Sections that candidates may need to reference while taking the exam.

As exam questions are developed in the later part of 2025 for the 2026 exams and beyond, it may be determined that some additional IBC related codes will be included in the Code document (i.e. IPC, IRC etc.).

7. Will BOMA be tested on future exams? I did not see it referenced on the new exam blueprints.

No, BOMA will no longer be tested on exams beginning in 2026 and beyond. BOMA methods of calculation as related to interior design are more specialized and mostly apply in the leasing world. The new exam blueprint will still cite knowledge of square footage standards. However, this is likely

to include more high-level knowledge such as understanding the difference between rentable and usable square footage, which is used in occupants load calculations, etc.

8. Will Professional Development and Ethics still be on the IDFX exam?

No, the Professional Development and Ethics domain that exists on the current IDFX exam blueprint will no longer be a part of the new exam blueprint as this content is not specific to any of the design phases.

Professional development is more appropriately demonstrated through continuing education activities which are required to maintain an active certification/license/registration.

Likewise, professional ethics are principles that govern the behavior of individuals in a particular profession and should be adhered to as part of the industry's professional standards or code of ethics. CIDQ has a code of ethics that certificate holders pledge to adhere to. There is also currently an effort underway between CIDQ and the interior design membership organizations to create a uniform code of ethics for the profession.

9. Will business structures be covered on any of the exams in the future?

No, business structures, such as joint ventures, sole proprietor, partnership, and corporation will not be covered on future exams as this knowledge is not part of a design phase and do not substantially impact HSW.

10. Will the new IDIX (formerly PRAC) exam still include Case Studies?

No, the IDIX (formerly PRAC) exam will no longer include Case Studies. However, there will be vignettes across all three (3) exams which will be based on a scenario and have 3-5 questions associated with the scenario.

11. How will the vignettes be presented on the exams?

CIDQ is still working through how these items will be presented, but likely the vignettes will be in a split screen format so that the scenario will appear on one side of the screen and the associated questions on the other side of the screen.

12. Will students still be able to take the IDFX exam in their final year of a bachelor's or master's interior design degree program?

Yes, the eligibility requirements are not changing. The IDFX exam content includes the design phases that are typically covered in an interior design degree program.

13. If a candidate has taken and passed one or two exam sections in 2025, will they have to retake that section(s) when the exam blueprints change?

No, any exam section that a candidate has passed will not have to be retaken when the exam blueprints change, as long as the candidate has an active exam application.

However, if an exam application expires at the end of 2025 and not all three (3) exams have been passed, the exam scores for any exam previously passed will be voided and the candidate will have to reapply, meeting the current eligibility requirements, and taking and passing all three (3) exam sections during a new application eligibility period (typically 5 years).

14. Is there a particular order in which you should take the exams?

Candidates can take the three (3) exam sections in any order they like. If candidates want to study for or take the exams in design phase order, it would be as follows: IDFX, IDIX (PRAC), IDPX.

15. Will the IDFX & IDPX exams include images/exhibits on future exams?

Yes, with the additional item types (drag and place, hot spot and fill in the blank) being included across all three (3) exams, exhibits/images will be used as needed to answer the question. FYI, the current IDFX & IDPX exams include some images already.

16. Will there be other item types added in addition to multiple choice, drag and place, hot spot and fill in the blank?

Currently there are no plans to introduce other item types to the exams.

17. Will candidates continue to receive preliminary exam results for the IDFX & IDPX exams?

Preliminary exam results will NOT be provided for at least the first exam administration in 2026.

When moving to a new exam blueprint, the first exam administration requires a new passing point to be established based on the new content being tested. This cannot be established until after the exam has been administered.

CIDQ will be working to provide preliminary exam results for all three (3) exams at some point in the future. The timing is still to be determined.

18. Which exams will be offered remotely?

It is CIDQ's intent to offer all three (3) exams remotely in the future. The timing is still to be determined.

19. Will CIDQ be changing the number of exam administrations during which the exams will be offered with the roll out of the new exam blueprints?

CIDQ has no plans to deviate from our current schedule of offering the exams during the months of April and October.

20. Will there be any changes to the number of questions on the exams?

Yes, please refer to the table below for the number of questions and exam times.

Exam	Number of Questions	Exam Time
IDFX	115 total questions (100 scored + 15 pre-test)	3 hours
IDPX	115 total questions (100 scored + 15 pre-test)	3 hours
IDIX (formerly PRAC)	130 total questions (115 scored + 15 pre-test)	4 hours

IDFX

Interior Design Fundamentals Exam

THIS BLUEPRINT APPLIES TO EXAMS IN 2026 AND FORWARD

The Interior Design Fundamentals Exam (IDFX) **focuses on programming and conceptual design, and schematic design phases** of interior design, with an emphasis on Health, Safety, and Welfare.

- 3 hours
- 115 questions (15 will be pre-test questions)
- Multiple Choice, Drag and Place, Fill in the Blank, Hot Spot

I. Existing Conditions 14%

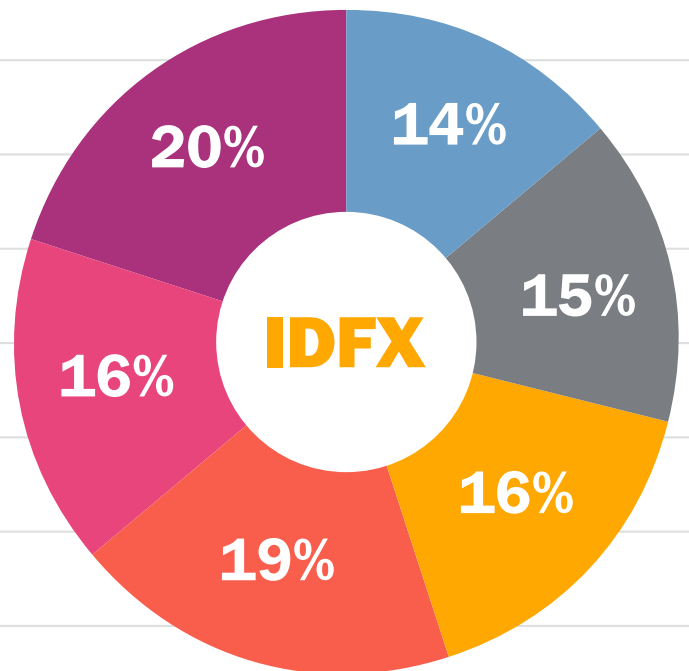
II. Pre-Design 15%

III. Programming 16%

IV. Space Planning 19%

V. Preliminary FF&E and Finishes 16%

VI. Schematics 20%



I. Existing Conditions

14%

Perform Site Analysis

- building location
- building types
- change of use
- environmental impacts (e.g., seismic, air quality, extreme weather, sound)
- historical information
- site conditions and constraints
- solar orientation

- transportation
- views
- zoning

Evaluate Existing Building Conditions

- construction types
- contextual influences (e.g., environmental, cultural, ecological)
- critical interior architectural constraints
- hazardous materials
- occupancy types

Perform Initial Code Analysis

- applicable codes and reference standards
- life safety
- occupancy load
- occupancy types

II. Pre-Design

15%

Establish Best Practices of Design

- client/brand standards
- evidence-based design

- market sectors (e.g., workplace, hospitality, healthcare, government, retail, residential)
- sustainability and wellness
- universal design
- signage and wayfinding

Perform Project Research and Development

- appropriate material usage or application
- contextual influences
- market analysis
- research methods (e.g., case studies, benchmarking, precedent studies)

Determine Design Intent

- client expectations and goals
- color theory
- design concept
- design elements and principles
- informational hierarchy
- spatial awareness
- visioning

III. Programming

16%

Validate Project Program

- adjacencies
- circulation
- gross building components
- occupancy load
- occupancy types
- spatial awareness
- typical square footage allocations

Create Programmatic Diagrams

- adjacency matrices
- block diagrams
- bubble diagrams
- parti diagrams
- stacking diagrams

Determine User Needs

- benchmarking

- cultural context
- demographics
- ergonomics
- human factors
- sensory considerations (e.g., acoustics, lighting, visual stimuli, scent, color response, tactile, thermal comfort)
- specific user needs
- universal design

IV. Space Planning

19%

Complete Space Planning (e.g., floorplan)

- circulation
- human factors
- life safety
- natural daylight and views
- spatial relationships
- structural limitations
- universal design

Create Initial Drawings (e.g., elevations, RCP, finish plans, sections)

- design intent
- graphic standards
- preliminary lighting layouts
- requisite drawings to communicate design intent

V. Preliminary FF&E and Finishes

16%

Identify Finish Materials

- aesthetics
- budgets and lead times
- color theory
- material applications
- material sourcing
- material sustainability
- reference standards and guidelines
- universal design

Identify Significant FF&E

- FF&E customization
- FF&E feasibility
- FF&E impacts to budgets and lead times
- FF&E sourcing
- FF&E special requirements
- how to scope construction (millwork) vs FF&E products
- human factors

VI. Schematics

20%

Refine Design Intent

- client expectations and goals
- design concept
- design elements and principles
- spatial awareness
- signage and wayfinding strategies

Perform Code Review

- applicable codes and reference standards
- life safety
- universal design

Visualize Design

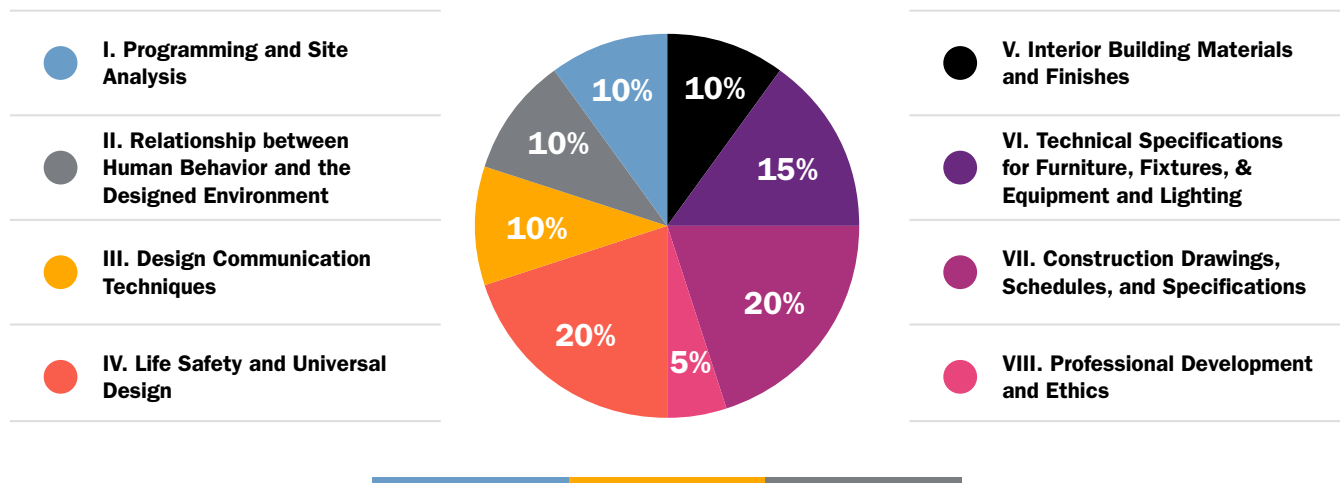
- presentation methods
- visualization software
- visualization techniques
- visualization tools

IDFX

Interior Design Fundamentals Exam

- 3 hours
- 125 questions
- Multiple Choice

The **Interior Design Fundamentals Exam (IDFX)** focuses on the concepts and principles of interior design with an emphasis on Health, Safety and Welfare. Candidates eligible for the IDFX includes students (in their final year of a Bachelor's or Master's in Interior Design degree program), recent graduates and emerging professionals with an applicable interior design degree. The IDFX exam covers competencies in: programming and site analysis; relationship between human behavior and the designed environment; design communication techniques; life safety and universal design; interior building materials and finishes; technical specifications for furniture, fixtures, & equipment and lighting; construction drawings, schedules and specifications; and professional development and ethics.



I. Programming and Site Analysis 10%

Demonstrate appropriate use of:

- **analysis tools** (e.g., spreadsheets, site photographs, matrices, bubble diagrams, graphs, behavioral based analytics)

Demonstrate understanding of:

- **research methods** (e.g., observations, interviewing, surveying, case studies, benchmarking, precedent studies)
- **the site context** (e.g., location, views, solar orientation, zoning, historical information, constraints, change of use, transportation)

II. Relationship between Human Behavior and the Designed Environment 10%

Demonstrate understanding of:

- **human factors** (e.g., ergonomics, anthropometrics, proxemics, psychological, physiological, social)
- **universal design** (e.g., accessibility, ability level, inclusivity, special needs, aging population, bariatric, pediatric)
- **contextual influences** (e.g., environmental and ecological, social, cultural, aesthetic, hierarchy of needs)

Demonstrate knowledge of:

- **sensory considerations** (e.g., acoustics, lighting, visual stimuli, color response, scent, tactile, thermal comfort)

III. Design Communication Techniques

10%

Ability to apply:

- **data and research** (e.g., charts, infographics, analytics)
- **conceptual diagrams** (e.g., parti diagrams, bubble diagrams, adjacency matrices)
- **planning diagrams** (e.g., stacking/zoning diagrams, block plans/square footage allocations)

IV. Life Safety and Universal Design

20%

Demonstrate understanding of:

- **life safety** (e.g., egress, fire separation, fire-rated partitions and doors, and A/V alarms location coordination)
- **universal design** (e.g., inclusive design, accessible design)

V. Interior Building Materials and Finishes

10%

Demonstrate understanding of:

- **textiles** (e.g., types, testing standards and codes, applications, installation methods, estimating, technical specifications)
- **floor coverings** (e.g., types, transitions, testing standards and codes, applications, installation methods, estimating, slip resistance, technical specifications)
- **wall treatments** (e.g., types, testing standards and codes, applications, installation methods, estimating, technical specifications)
- **window treatments** (e.g., types, testing standards and codes, applications, installation methods, estimating, technical specifications)
- **ceiling treatments** (e.g., types, testing standards and codes, applications, installation methods, estimating, technical specifications)
- **acoustical products** (e.g., types, testing standards and codes, applications, installation methods, estimating, technical specifications)
- **wayfinding and signage** (e.g., types, testing standards and codes, applications, installation methods, estimating, technical specifications)

VI. Technical Specifications for Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment and Lighting

15%

Demonstrate understanding of:

- **life safety elements** (e.g., flammability, toxicity, slip resistance, accessibility and egress clearances, fixed and loose furniture, indoor air quality, code compliance)
- **sustainability and environmental impact** (e.g., recyclability, cradle to cradle, embodied energy, carbon footprint, material

sourcing, ratings and certifications)

- **materials and technical specifications** (e.g., color fastness, abrasion resistance, cleanability, reference standards, ANSI/BIFMA)
- **light fixture selection and specification** (e.g., general, accent and task lighting; color temperature, color rendering, lamp types, energy load)

VII. Construction Drawings, Schedules, and Specifications

20%

Demonstrate understanding of:

- **code required information** (e.g., egress, accessibility, specialty codes, fire/life safety, occupancy, plumbing calculations)
- **appropriate measuring conventions** (e.g., scale, unit of measure, dimensioning)
- **construction drawing standards** (e.g., annotations, hatch patterns, line types, symbols, north arrow, section cuts, cross referencing)

Understand and develop:

- **general information sheets** (e.g., general conditions and notes, drawing index, legend, symbols, location, consultant, contact information)
- **demolition plans**
- **floor plans** (e.g., partition plan, construction plan, dimension plan)
- **reflected ceiling and/or lighting plans** (e.g., supplies, returns, ceiling types, heights, monitoring and detection devices, switching, controls)
- **furniture plans**
- **finish plans**
- **elevations, sections, and details** (e.g., partition types, enlarged plans, custom details and assemblies)
- **power, data, and communication plans**
- **schedules** (e.g., finish, equipment, plumbing, lighting, door, window, hardware, accessories)
- **millwork** (e.g., construction techniques, coordination with Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment, and utilities, substrates, shop drawings, material selection, accessibility)

VIII. Professional Development and Ethics

5%

Demonstrate understanding of:

- **professional ethics** (e.g., code of ethics, consumer protection, health, safety, welfare, social responsibility)
- **professional development** (e.g., professional organizations, continuing education)

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IDIX

Interior Design Implementation Exam

THIS BLUEPRINT APPLIES TO EXAMS IN 2026 AND FORWARD

The Interior Design Implementation Exam (IDIX) **focuses on the design development and construction documentation phases** of interior design, with an emphasis on Health, Safety, and Welfare.

- 4 hours
- 130 questions (15 will be pre-test questions)
- Multiple Choice, Drag and Place, Fill in the Blank, Hot Spot

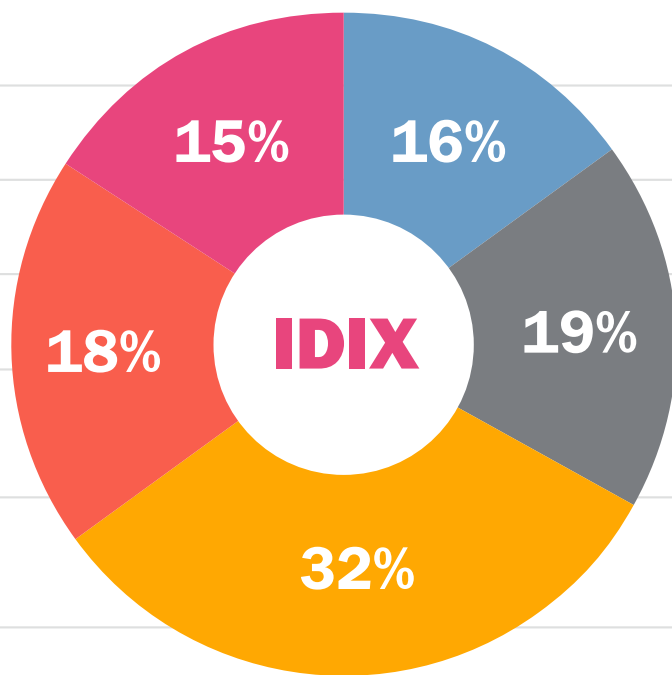
I. Codes and Life Safety 16%

II. Integration and FF&E 19%

III. Construction Documents 32%

IV. Consultant Drawing Coordination 18%

V. Construction Specifications and Schedules 15%



I. Codes and Life Safety

16%

Initiate Life Safety and/or Occupancy Plan

- egress requirements
- fire ratings
- occupancy load
- plumbing fixture counts
- travel distances

Perform Code Review

- applicable codes and standards
- life safety
- material testing standards
- universal design
- code checklist
- code required signage
- general information sheet
- permit requirements
- QA/QC process

II. Integration and FF&E

19%

Integrate Equipment, Appliance, and Building Systems

- acoustical systems
- appliances and specialty equipment
- building components
- electrical systems
- fire protection systems

- home automation systems
- installation methods
- lighting systems
- low voltage systems
- mechanical systems
- plumbing systems
- structural systems
- vertical and horizontal systems of transport

Develop Finish Plan and Specifications

- annotations/tags/

- callouts
- enlarged plans and details
- floor finish plans
- flooring transitions
- graphic representation of materials
- manufacturer's recommendations
- material applications
- material types and sizes
- vertical wall transitions

Develop Furniture Plans and Specifications

- furniture clearances
- furniture coordination with electrical and data
- furniture layouts
- furniture mockups
- furniture sizes
- quantity takeoffs
- sourcing and procurement methods
- textiles, fabric, and finishes
- types of specifications

III. Construction Documents

32%

Develop Details and Sections

- construction techniques and tolerances
- custom details and assemblies
- FF&E integration
- graphic standards of materials
- material installation
- millwork construction
- substrates
- transitions (e.g., ceiling, floors, walls)
- wall types (e.g., fire rating, acoustics, moisture barrier)

- window and door details

Develop Elevations

- annotations/tags/callouts
- critical elevations (e.g., feature walls, wet walls, green walls)
- glazing elevations
- horizontal wall transitions
- material height locations
- millwork
- section symbols
- toilet rooms
- typical mounting heights
- vertical dimensions

Develop Demolition Plan

- abatement
- construction phasing
- construction types
- drawing conventions
- existing conditions
- hazardous materials
- structural constraints

Develop Construction Plans

- accessible route
- clearances
- door types
- enlarged plans
- existing structures
- fire ratings
- general notes
- key notes
- partition types
- plumbing types
- sheet notes

Develop RCP

- acoustics
- annotations/tags/callouts
- ceiling heights
- ceiling systems and types
- ceiling transitions
- headers
- lighting functions

- lighting layouts
- lighting specifications (e.g., fixtures, zoning, sensors, daylighting, distribution, size, energy codes, lighting power density)
- lighting types
- plenum
- relevant consultant ceiling systems
- structural systems
- switching and controls

IV. Consultant Drawing Coordination

18%

Coordinate Consultant Drawings and Specifications (e.g., lighting, plumbing, electrical, equipment)

- ability to consult with specialty consultants
- building systems
- conflicts between drawings
- consult with architect, civil engineer, electrical engineer, lighting consultant, mechanical engineer, plumbing engineer
- consultant deliverables
- consultant disciplines
- coordination of drawings
- coordination of specifications
- hierarchy of information

Develop Power, Data, and Communication Plan

- annotations/tags/callouts
- AV integration
- electrical requirements
- energy code
- FF&E coordination
- low voltage coordination

- millwork coordination
- mounting heights
- outlet types and installation methods
- security integration

Develop Signage and Wayfinding

- code required signage
- signage and wayfinding strategies

V. Construction Specifications and Schedules

15%

Develop Construction Specifications

- basis of design
- concrete specifications
- elements included in a specification
- equipment specifications
- finish specifications
- general specifications
- metal specifications
- mockup specifications
- openings specifications
- specification divisions
- specification format
- types of specifications (e.g., open, closed, proprietary)
- window covering specifications
- woods, plastics, composites specifications

Develop Schedules

- accessory schedules
- door schedules
- equipment schedules
- finish schedules
- furniture schedules
- hardware schedules
- plumbing schedules
- room schedules
- window schedules

IDPX

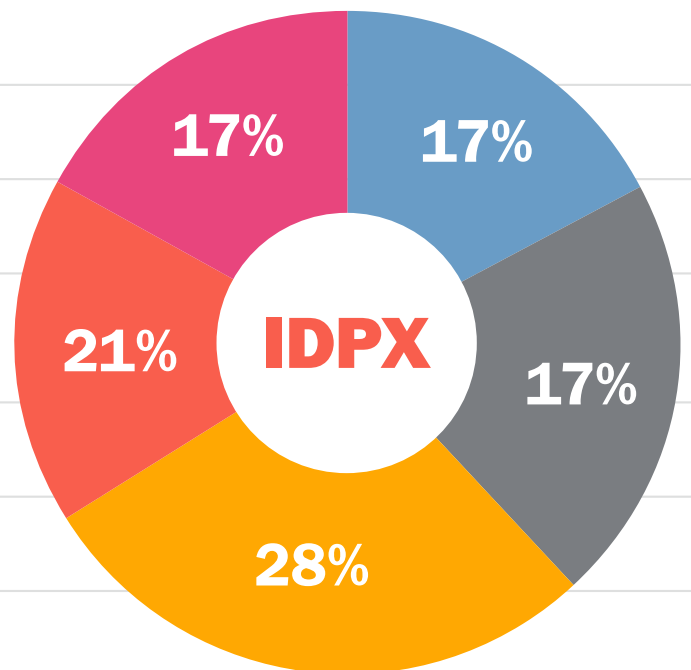
Interior Design Professional Exam

THIS BLUEPRINT APPLIES TO EXAMS IN 2026 AND FORWARD

The Interior Design Professional Exam (IDPX) **focuses on the construction administration and project management phases** of interior design, with an emphasis on Health, Safety, and Welfare.

- 3 hours
- 115 questions (15 will be pre-test questions)
- Multiple Choice, Drag and Place, Fill in the Blank, Hot Spot

- **I. Feasibility Studies 17%**
- **II. Scheduling and Budgeting 17%**
- **III. Contracts, Procurement, and Permitting 28%**
- **IV. Construction Process 21%**
- **V. Site Observation and Close-Out 17%**



I. Feasibility Studies

17%

Evaluate Project Feasibility and Due Diligence

- applicable codes and reference standards
- building types

- client expectations and goals
- energy requirements
- existing conditions analysis
- feasibility studies
- occupancy types
- project funding sources
- square footage requirements
- zoning

Identify Project Stakeholders

- participatory design
- project funding sources
- project requirements
- roles and responsibilities
- stakeholder requirements
- stakeholder surveys
- types of stakeholders

Manage Project Team

- code officials
- construction manager
- internal staffing requirement
- operator and/or brand representative
- outsourced consultants
- owner/owner's representative
- roles and responsibilities

II. Scheduling and Budgeting

17%

Manage Project Schedule

- approval management
- client expectations and goals
- construction process
- dependencies
- lead times
- project phasing
- resource management
- schedule components (e.g., critical path, milestone, inspection checkpoint)
- staffing availability
- time implications of construction types

Manage Project Budget

- allowances and contingencies
- cost estimating (e.g., labor, product, market)
- funding sources
- lead time cost impacts
- market variations and pricing
- preferred pricing
- preferred vendors and manufacturers
- product sourcing techniques
- socioeconomic impacts on costs
- soft costs vs hard costs
- tax credits
- value engineering

III. Contracts, Procurement, and Permitting

28%

Facilitate Procurement/ Bid (Tender) Process

- alternates and allowances
- bid structure (e.g., design-bid-build, design-build)
- budgeting and cost estimating
- FF&E vs construction procurement
- lead times
- liability
- market pricing
- parameters of maintenance
- procurement delivery and installation
- purchase orders
- value engineering

Manage Proposals and Contracts

- accounting and billing practices
- exclusions and additional services
- fee structure
- legal considerations
- liability
- project scope
- proposal types
- request for proposal process
- request for qualifications process
- scope of services
- types of agreements (e.g., architect-consultant, FF&E, leasing, owner-architect)
- types of contracts (e.g., professional services, construction)

Obtain Project Approvals

- approval process procedures
- budget approvals
- building permit approvals
- change approvals
- client sign-offs
- critical sign-off stages
- design phase approvals
- schedule approvals

Participate in Permit Process

- applicable codes and reference standards
- code required drawings
- jurisdictional processes
- process timing
- roles and responsibilities

IV. Construction Process

21%

Facilitate the Construction Process

- approval process
- construction meetings
- mockups
- product data
- prototypes
- RFIs
- roles and responsibilities
- samples (e.g., cutting for approvals (CFAs), strike-offs)
- shop drawings
- submittals

Participate in Change Management

- approval process
- bulletins
- change directive
- change order
- change process procedures

- client management
- cost implications of changes
- how to record changes in contract documents
- liability
- roles and responsibilities
- schedule impacts of changes
- substitutions
- value engineering

V. Site Observation and Close-Out

17%

Perform Site Visits

- construction means and methods
- construction safety
- field reports
- liability
- mockups
- pay applications
- quality of work
- roles and responsibilities

Conduct Project Close-Out

- archiving of projects
- certificates of occupancy (e.g., temporary, final)
- close-out procedures
- commissioning
- end user satisfaction
- liability
- maintenance manuals
- post-occupancy evaluation
- progress inspections vs final inspections
- project record management
- punch (deficiency) lists
- roles and responsibilities
- substantial completion vs final completion

NCIDQ Examination

BY THE COUNCIL FOR
INTERIOR DESIGN QUALIFICATION

NCIDQ Certification is the industry's recognized indicator of proficiency in interior design principles and commitment to the profession.

The NCIDQ Exam consists of 3 sections, all of which focus on public health, safety, and welfare. Specific education and work experience requirements exist to be eligible to sit for the NCIDQ Exam.

Information & Eligibility Pathways are available at CIDQ.org.

“NCIDQ Certification is the one constant in our business that sets the standard for excellence and is the threshold for professional design careers.”

Jim Klawiter,
NCIDQ Certificate
No. 28929

Are you a student in your final year of a Bachelor's or Master's Degree Interior Design Program or a recent graduate?

Apply now for **IDFX** prior to completing qualified work experience!

IDFX

Fundamentals Exam

- 3 hours
- 125 questions
- Multiple Choice

IDPX

Professional Exam

- 4 hours
- 175 questions
- Multiple Choice

PRAC

Practicum Exam

- 4 hours
- 114 questions
- Fill in the Blank, Hot Spot, Drag and Place

EXAM CALENDAR

	SPRING EXAMS	FALL EXAMS
Applications Accepted	August 1 – January 31 DEADLINE: JANUARY 31*	February 1 – July 31 DEADLINE: JULY 31*
Exam Payment & Scheduling Period	January 3 – March 31	July 1 – September 30
Exam Administration	April 1 – 30	October 1 – 31

*A complete application must be received by the application deadline date to be eligible for review for the upcoming exam administration. Applications will be reviewed and notification of status will be sent within 10 business days of receipt.

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1

CREATE OR LOGIN TO YOUR MyNCIDQ ACCOUNT

MyNCIDQ.org

2

DETERMINE YOUR EXAM ELIGIBILITY PATHWAY

CIDQ.org/paths

- A Bachelor's/Master's/Associate's degree in Interior Design with a total of 60 interior design credit hours **OR** a Bachelor's/Master's degree in Architecture is required.
- A minimum of 2 years of verified interior design work experience is needed to apply for Route 1

3

APPLY TO SIT FOR YOUR NCIDQ EXAMS

- Have your educational institution submit official education transcripts to transcripts@cidq.org.
- Have work experience verified by a qualifying direct supervisor/sponsor in your MyNCIDQ Account (not required for Route 2, Part 1 applicants)
- Pay the application **fee** and await approval

4

PURCHASE EXAMS THROUGH MyNCIDQ ACCOUNT

- Exams can be taken in any order, once approved
- Purchased exams are valid for the current exam administration window only (April or October)

5

SCHEDULE EXAMS WITH PROMETRIC

- Prometric Test Centers are **located around the world**
- Schedule the date, time, and location of your exam(s) in the same administration window for which you purchased (April or October)
- Candidates taking the IDFX & IDPX exams can schedule remotely proctored exams.

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