

# Introduction

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## About the LARE and Section A—Project and Construction Administration

Successful completion of the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (LARE) is required for licensure as a landscape architect in the 49 U.S. states, one U.S. territory, and two Canadian provinces that license landscape architects. The LARE is administered by the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB). Once licensed in any state, you can establish a record with CLARB, which can expedite the reciprocity process when applying for licensure in other states.

The LARE consists of five sections. The three multiple-choice sections (Sections A, B, and D) are administered by computer testing centers across the United States and Canada in January, April, July, and October. The two graphic sections (Sections C and E) are administered by regional testing centers in June and December. PPI's website ([www.ppi2pass.com](http://www.ppi2pass.com)) gives information about exam reference materials covering all LARE sections.

The Section A exam consists of 70 multiple-choice problems divided into the following five subjects. Approximate problem percentages for each subject are given in parentheses.

- communication (20%)
- standards of practice (23%)
- contract administration (17%)
- construction evaluation (20%)
- construction practices (20%)

CLARB provides detailed specifications for each exam section on its website. Since the test varies each time it is administered, the number of problems in each subject can shift slightly. But reviewing the exam specifications gives an overview of the subject matter covered and can guide your preparation.

When taking the multiple-choice sections, you will be required to select the single best choice for each problem within the allotted time for the section. Most problems will present four

options; occasionally, a problem will have up to nine options. One hour and 45 minutes are allowed for the 70 problems in Section A, so each problem should average a solution time of roughly 1.5 minutes.

### **What to Bring to the Exam**

For the multiple-choice sections, you should bring two forms of ID—one of which should be a photo ID—with you to the exam site. It is also a good idea to bring bottled water and an unobtrusive snack.

You are not permitted to bring reference materials, calculators, pencils, pens, or paper to the exam. Calculators, pencils, scratch paper, and a copy of the *LARE Reference Manual* (which provides the code requirements and design criteria used on the exam) will be provided at the exam site. Any other materials that would need to be referenced, such as wood sizing charts, will also be provided.

### **Successful Exam Preparation**

The first step in preparing for the LARE multiple-choice sections is to confirm the application deadlines and prerequisites for submitting an application. Most states have an application submission deadline three to four months prior to the exam date, so you should be sure to meet all experience requirements prior to the application due date (not just the exam date). Although not all states require professional experience to sit for the exam, the confidence and skill set needed to pass come from having a few years of professional experience in a diverse landscape architecture practice.

You should conduct many study sessions in preparation for the exam. Problem-solving speed and confidence come from practice. It is always in your best interest to observe good work habits and exercise sound time management during study sessions. You should become accustomed to minor distractions during study sessions; the testing centers often provide their own share of distractions and discomforts.

The *LARE Content Guide* and *LARE Reference Manual*, which can be downloaded from the CLARB website, are critical exam-preparation tools. The *LARE Content Guide* gives exam specifications and other indispensable information on exam content. The *LARE Reference Manual* contains specific code requirements and design criteria that might apply to any problem. You should be familiar with all sections of the manual and be able to quickly reference, if not memorize, the critical information from each section.

Your local chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) may offer exam preparatory sessions, which present good opportunities for gaining first-hand insight into the exam and for meeting other people who might be interested in forming study groups.

### **Problem-Solving Strategies**

The LARE problems change from year to year. However, the nature and format of the problems will be similar across all exams, and getting familiar with the problem types is an effective way to prepare. Multiple-choice sections may contain quantitative or nonquantitative problems.

Nonquantitative problems fall into two general categories: (1) “basic recall” problems, which require you to name, identify, or remember the correct term or concept from a list, or (2) “complex” or “situational” problems, which require you to apply a principle, concept, or skill, make a judgment, or otherwise address a complex situation.

To solve nonquantitative problems, you should start by reading the problem statement only, and should then formulate an answer before looking at any of the given options. This approach promotes better recall and helps avoid confusion caused by seeing similar terms presented in the options. Once you determine the correct answer, read the options and select the corresponding answer choice.

Incorrect answers on the LARE do not count against the total score, so it is in your best interest to answer every problem. A good, time-conserving approach is to work through the entire exam quickly, answering all problems that can be confidently addressed, and flagging the ones that will require more thoughtful analysis. In the remaining time, go over the unaddressed problems in a second pass, working through the more complex solutions. If any problems are still unanswered near the end of the exam time limit, eliminate options known to be incorrect and then make a reasonable guess between the remaining options.

### **Additional Reference Materials**

For construction and contract administration, I recommend the following resources.

- Abbett, Robert C. *Engineering Contracts and Specifications*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Clough, Richard H. and Glenn A. Sears. *Construction Contracting*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hardie, Glenn M. *Construction Contracts and Specifications*. Reston Publishing Company.
- Hinze, Jimmie. *Construction Contracts*. McGraw-Hill.
- Poage, Waller S. *Plans, Specs and Contracts for Building Professionals*. R.S. Means.

I also recommend the *Handbook of Professional Practice*, by Lane Marshall, FASLA, which is an early version of his book, *Guidelines to Professional Practice*, for information about project administration; and the *Regulation of the Profession*, by Alex Schatz, ASLA, for topics pertaining to health, safety, and welfare, liability, construction related claims, and professional regulation by states.

Additional Section A exam resources can be found at [www.ppi2pass.com/LAREresources](http://www.ppi2pass.com/LAREresources).

# How To Use This Book

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## **Using This Book as a Student or Professional**

This book is organized according to the LARE Section A exam subjects. To optimize the benefits of this book, you should first work through all the problems, selecting the most likely answer from among the options presented. When finished, you can score your exam and analyze the results by checking the solutions in the back of the book, comparing the given solutions against your own problem-solving approaches, and assessing whether your approaches follow the same logic and reach the same conclusions. Based on this analysis, you can identify areas for improvement and tailor the next phase of study to address those knowledge gaps. Refer to this book's list of additional references to supplement your study.

## **Using This Book as an Instructor**

Though lecture can be an indispensable tool when preparing for the LARE, students and professionals benefit most from solving problems. The *LARE Review, Section A Sample Exam* was designed to be used in a variety of classroom settings (such as accredited programs with or without dedicated courses for the LARE Section A exam, exam prep classes, and workshops, etc.). It may be used in its entirety to mimic the actual exam, or problems can be assigned from each of the five subcategories. Because working through solutions and explaining how to solve problems is an invaluable process, lectures should include reviewing all problems and solutions—especially those of difficulty.

The *LARE Review, Section A Sample Exam* may be used at the beginning of a course or workshop to assess strengths and weaknesses, or at the end to allow students or professionals to practice the skills and techniques they have learned, and to check their understanding of the material. This book's list of additional reference materials may also be used for additional exam study or guidance.