

Introduction

The national Landscape Architecture Registration Exam (LARE), administered by the Council of Landscape Architecture Registration Boards (CLARB), is required for licensure in 48 of the United States, one U.S. territory, and the two Canadian provinces that license landscape architects. CLARB regularly reviews and updates the LARE to keep it current with the responsibilities and professional practice of landscape architects. The LARE comprises the following five sections.

Section A: Project and Construction Administration

Section B: Inventory, Analysis and Program Development

Section C: Site Design*

Section D: Design and Construction Documentation

Section E: Grading, Drainage, and Stormwater Management*

Multiple-choice sections A, B, and D are administered in computer testing centers in September and March. Vignette (graphic) sections C and E (*) are administered in board-established test centers in June and December. CLARB provides examination information on their website (www.clarb.org), including procedures, locations, contacts, review materials, and schedules. Note that the exam may be taken in parts rather than all at once. Check with CLARB and your state board for more information on the exam.

This book, *LARE Review, Mastering Section C: Site Design*, provides preparation for Section C of the LARE. Measurements in this book are given in customary U.S. (English) units, as well as SI for Canadian examinees. (See Professional Publications' website, www.ppi2pass.com/LARE, for a large selection of exam reference materials for all five sections of the LARE.)

Graphic Sections of the LARE

While sections A, B, and D are in multiple-choice format, and considered by CLARB to be “knowledge based,” the graphic sections (vignettes) require the examinee to solve project-based problems within the range of tasks commonly undertaken in the profession. Graphically solved sections are considered by CLARB to be “experienced based.” For that reason, CLARB does not specify the content for Sections C and E with the same detail it provides for the multiple choice sections of the LARE. This means that the examinee must prepare to demonstrate mastery of a variety of project types in a wide range of subject areas.

A LARE vignette is a problem requiring a graphic solution to a program and site. A vignette can require any of the following.

- A written summary of one or more sites
- A written critique of one or more designs
- A diagram or matrix
- A conceptual plan
- A detailed design

Vignettes may involve a variety of project types, sites, and scales in order to test the breadth of the examinee’s professional skills. They require the examinee to demonstrate the ability to analyze and conceptualize, to understand site or design relationships, and to synthesize ideas in achieving a solution. Written critiques that typically require short amounts of time are incorporated as parts of some vignettes. For example, an examinee may be required to write a summary of the attributes of a site or site plan; to write a justification for the approval or rejection of a site(s); to prepare a hierarchical ranking of site or design attributes; or to compare conceptual site designs.

Section C: Site Design

Site design, commonly called site planning, can be defined as “the arrangement of uses on the land.” The principles of site planning guide the functional arrangement of uses with regard for the most basic issues of health, safety, and the welfare of the public, and with regard for limiting environmental degradation. Regard for these issues is at the very heart of the profession of landscape architecture.

Section C of the LARE is designed to assess an examinee’s skill in site design, which CLARB defines as the “location of elements, integration with natural and built environment, and three-dimensional thinking.” The combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for Section C is developed by CLARB. The following list, derived from a list that was published in CLARB’s booklet, *The Road to Licensure*, 1997, names the component capabilities.

- Analyzing the site
 - Understanding the physical characteristics, including micro and macro climatic conditions and systems
 - Understanding the influence of views and local context on land use

- Organizing and synthesizing data
 - Understanding program relationships
- Creating alternative solutions to a problem
 - Translating programs into conceptual designs
 - Evaluating and selecting the best alternative from multiple solutions
 - Organizing the physical elements on a site
- Translating a concept into a design solution
 - Siting buildings and structures

This list should not be considered to be permanent. CLARB, in any year, can make changes and additions to exam content. CLARB will continue to add content and change vignettes based on task analyses and the profession's body of knowledge. For example, in 2006, CLARB mentioned a new area of content, sustainability. However, because this term can be broadly interpreted, it is difficult to identify how it will be addressed in Section C vignettes.

The vignettes of Section C must be successfully completed over a limited period of time, requiring that the examinee be well prepared for the LARE format and familiar with its variety of projects. For this reason, CLARB refers to vignettes as experience-based, and encourages recent graduates to obtain practical experience before taking the exam.

The vignettes provide directives through both *explicit* and *implicit* instructions. Both types of directives should be understood by the examinee. *Explicit* instructions are given in the problem statement. *Implicit* instructions are not specifically stated, but are considered as standards in the profession. They carry the same weight as explicit instructions, and include the following.

- Health, safety, and welfare issues
- Requirements of the *LARE Reference Manual*
- Matters of judgment related to environmental protection

CLARB Grading

The LARE is graded by licensed landscape architects who are trained in the exam's scoring process. In fact, licensed professionals actually take the LARE months before the exam is administered, to provide a baseline for grading. The graders are in turn supervised by master graders.

LARE Scoring

Each vignette in Section C of the LARE is scored qualitatively. Solutions that demonstrate at least minimum competence rate "pass" or "borderline pass." Solutions that fail to demonstrate some primary knowledge, skill, or ability rate "borderline fail." Solutions that do not demonstrate minimum competence are scored as "fail."

Section C of the LARE tests the following six areas of competence.

- Conveying information in text and drawings
- Synthesizing landscape architecture with outside disciplines, including consultant studies
- Developing conceptual design, planning, and management solutions in the light of on-site and off-site influences
- Predicting the implications of design, planning, and management proposals on natural and cultural systems
- Creating alternative designs demonstrating a range of options
- Evaluating alternative designs to determine the appropriate solution
- Designing circulation systems for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, equestrians, or others

The examinee's score for Section C will be reported as "pass" or "fail," but a numerical score for each of the six areas of competence will be supplied for use as a guide in identifying areas for improvement, in the event of a failing score. Because of the differences in problem context and weighting, a given infraction may receive a different score on different vignettes within the same set.

Download a copy of *LARE: A Step by Step Guide* from the CLARB website (www.clarb.org) for complete information on the process of creating and scoring the LARE.

How to Use This Book

This is a book of organized strategies (and useful information) for success in taking Section C of the LARE. It is intended to be the place for you to start your studies, but definitely not the place for you to stop. In reading a chapter, take special note of the *Things to Remember*, and then practice with the problems at the end of the chapter. To get the most out of the practice problems, begin each problem-solving session by following the strategies from all the previous chapters. Make sure you are comfortable with the tools you selected from the Tool List in Ch. 1. Review the "Common Mistakes to Avoid in Section C" from Ch. 1 in your mind, and then check back to see if you have forgotten any of them. Write out, from memory, the portions of the *LARE Reference Manual* that are useful for the chapter, and then check to see if you have missed any. Make sure that you have the nine steps for taking the LARE, also from Ch. 1, firmly in mind before you start the problem. Get in the habit of approaching problems with systematic strategies at the ready. Observe the time limits given with each problem, to improve your efficiency. Finally, check your solution against the solution at the back of the book and be sure to research and understand any points that you missed.

Do as many practice problems and practice exams as you can find. To get the most out of the strategies in this book, practice them with each problem-solving session, whether the problems come from other PPI publications, the CLARB website, or any other source. The more you practice systematic approaches, the more easily they will come to you on exam day. Being systematic will help you to be calm, thorough, and efficient.