

Office of the  
*fairness*  
commissioner

Bureau du  
commissaire à  
*l'équité*



*Study of Registration Practices of the*

# **ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS, 2007**

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The Office of the Fairness Commissioner is an arm's-length agency of the Ontario government, established under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006. Its mandate is to ensure that certain regulated professions have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) undertook a study of registration practices of Ontario’s regulated professions during the fall and winter of 2007–2008. The purpose of the study was to understand each regulated profession’s 2007 registration practices and to establish baseline data and information to enable the OFC to measure progress as it fulfills its mandate under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006.

This report reflects the registration practices of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) as of December 31, 2007. Information in this report was gathered from:

- face-to-face meetings with registration staff of the regulatory body
- additional documentation provided by the regulatory body
- relevant websites
- career maps for the profession posted on the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration’s website (where applicable).

The Ontario Association of Architects also provided registration information and statistics for 2005, 2006 and 2007 through a standard spreadsheet designed by the OFC.

An analysis and summary of the findings for all of the regulated professions is contained in the OFC’s *Ontario’s Regulated Professions: Report on the 2007 Study of Registration Practices*.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE REGULATORY BODY

### A. Legislation

The Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) is governed by the Architects Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.A.26 and Ontario Regulation 27 under the Architects Act.

### B. Protected Titles

The OAA regulates architects in Ontario. To use the title “architect” or offer the services of an architect in Ontario, an individual must have:

- a licence as an architect, issued by the OAA
- a certificate of practice, issued by the OAA.

### **C. Definition of the Profession**

Architecture is the designing of, and the providing of aesthetic and technical advice on, built objects in public and private landscapes.

### **D. Labour Market/Economic Trends**

Approximately 2,600 architects are employed in Ontario, mostly in the Greater Toronto Area and Ottawa. About 50 per cent of these architects are self-employed as principals in firms of one or two architects. There are approximately 1,300 architecture offices in Ontario — one-half being sole proprietorships with small staff. Other architects work for architectural firms, government, real estate developers or large corporations, or teach. Most licensed architects work full-time.

Architects may specialize in housing or renovations, or institutional, industrial or commercial buildings. They often lead teams of specialists including structural, mechanical and electrical engineers, and must therefore have strong project and contract management abilities.

There is no constant customer base for architecture. In addition, the business is vulnerable to economic downturns, especially in the construction business. As a result, the business can be erratic and difficult to sustain for any firm.

Architects' salaries vary according to their levels of experience.

### **E. New Developments Within the Profession**

The OAA is developing a new examination for interns in Canada. The Examination for Architects in Canada (ExAC) is a practice-based examination designed to test the knowledge of interns after they have obtained at least 2,800 of the required hours of experience. This examination is for interns enrolled in the Intern Architect Program (IAP) only and may replace or provide an alternative option to the existing Architect Registration Examination (ARE). The OAA expects that the ExAC will be in place in late 2008.

### **F. Staffing**

The OAA Office of the Registrar has seven full-time employees. All seven of these employees are involved with some aspects of the registration process.

### **3. REGISTRATION PRACTICES**

#### **A. Registration Requirements and Application Process**

The Architects Act and Regulation 27 set the requirements for the issuing of a licence as an architect in Ontario. According to the legislation, applicants for a licence must:

- Be of good character
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a citizen or permanent resident of Canada, or be a member of an organization of architects that is recognized by the OAA Council and that has objects, standards of practice and requirements for membership similar to those of the OAA
- Have a degree in architecture from a post-secondary institution or have successfully completed the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada syllabus
- Have a Certificate of Certification from the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB)
- Successfully complete the Admission Course offered by the OAA
- Successfully complete a total of 5,600 hours of experience that meets the requirements of the national Intern Architect Program (IAP). Of these 5,600 hours:
  - At least 2,780 hours must be under an architect.
  - At least 940 hours must be in Ontario on projects physically located in Ontario, in an architectural practice under the personal supervision and direction of an architect. This experience must be completed within three years of an Application for Licence. This 940 hours may be counted as part of the 2,780 hours mentioned in the previous point.
- Pass the Architect Registration Examination (ARE) of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.

#### **B. Documentation Required from Internationally Trained Individuals**

##### **i. Standard Documentation**

All applicants must apply for certification of their academic qualifications through the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB). The following information must be submitted directly to the CACB:

- A completed application

- An official Transcript of Record (or notarized copy) of all studies relevant to the architecture degree (and certified copies of translated transcripts, if the original is not in French or English)
- Notarized copies of degrees or diplomas in the original language (and a notarized copy of the translation of the degree or diploma, if the original is not in French or English)
- Course descriptions for the program in architecture (or a translation of course descriptions, if the originals are not in French or English)
- An academic portfolio of studio work
- An application fee of \$1,300 plus goods and services tax (GST), payable in Canadian currency only. Credit cards are not accepted. (**Note:** The fee is \$110 for graduates of an accredited school of architecture in Canada or the United States.)

#### **ii. Options for Applicants with Unavailable/Destroyed Documents**

Applicants must contact the CACB for all matters concerning their documents.

### **C. Credential Assessment (Third Party and/or Internal)**

The CACB Assessment Committee reviews the documents the applicant submits and determines whether the education is equivalent to the Canadian Education Standard (CES). In some cases, applicants may be asked to attend an interview with the Assessment Committee.

The assessment process has three possible outcomes:

- A CACB certificate is issued, if the academic qualifications meet the CES.
- The applicant may be required to eliminate deficiencies in particular subject areas by successfully completing one or more courses recommended by the CACB.
- The academic qualifications do not meet the requirements of the CES and the CACB.

### **D. Academic/Program Requirements**

#### **i. Academic Qualifications**

Applicants require a degree in architecture from a post-secondary institution, or must have successfully completed the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada syllabus.

Applicants must apply for certification of their academic qualifications through the CACB.

## ii. OAA Admission Course

Every applicant for a licence with the OAA must attend the Admission Course. The course is offered once a year in Toronto, usually during May or June. The Admission Course covers topics related to regulatory, legal and practice issues specific to Ontario. It is designed to supplement the applicant's formal professional education and the practical experience gained during the period of internship. Familiarity with *The Canadian Handbook of Practice* is part of the Admission Course.

To be eligible for registration in the Admission Course, the applicant must:

- Hold intern architect status with the OAA, with all current fees paid in full
- Complete the Admission Course application form
- Pay the Admission Course registration fee.

The content of the lectures for 2008 includes the following:

- the Architects Act, regulation and by-laws, the profession and the OAA
- legal aspects and contracts
- planning and development approvals
- the building code
- the bid process
- the Construction Lien Act
- contract administration and general review.

## E. Work Experience Requirements

Once the CACB has certified an individual's credentials, he or she submits an application for appointment as an intern architect with the Intern Architect Program (IAP). The applicant must find a mentor with one of the ten provincial architectural associations. The OAA can provide a list of architects who are willing to serve as mentors.

Applicants must complete 5,600 hours of work experience to fulfill the experience requirement. This must include 940 hours of experience in Ontario (within the three years before an application for licence) on projects physically located in Ontario, under the personal supervision and direction of an architect licensed to engage in the practice of architecture in Ontario. Applicants may be eligible for credit for up to 4,660 hours of their international work experience.

Each applicant must satisfy the requirements of the Canadian Experience Record Book (CERB), and record all work experience in the CERB.

Work experience will be reviewed by the OAA and may be considered for part of the Intern Architect Program requirements. If an applicant's international experience forms part of the 5,600 hours of required experience, he or she must attend an interview with the Experience Requirements Committee at the time of applying for a licence.

## **F. Examinations**

The Architect Registration Examination (ARE) was developed by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and has been adopted by the Canadian provincial and territorial architectural associations as a requirement for licensing. The ARE is administered and graded by computers in test centres across Canada and the United States. Although the OAA sends eligibility information directly to the testing organization, intern architects are responsible for scheduling each division of the examination. (The different divisions of the exam are listed in section 3.h.)

An individual who fails a division must wait for six months before retaking that division. Results are sent directly to the OAA, and the OAA forwards the results to the intern architect.

## **G. Language Requirements**

The OAA does not require any specific language abilities. However, as part of the academic assessment process by the CACB, an applicant may be required to attend an interview, in English or French, before the Assessment Committee for a detailed evaluation.

## H. Fees

GST must be added to the costs listed here. Except for the Architect Registration Examination fees, all fees are shown in Canadian dollars. Payment must be made in Canadian funds and is non-refundable. Shipping costs may apply.

Fee	
<b>Various Application Fees</b>	
Assessment of academic qualifications by the CACB for graduates of a foreign school of architecture	\$1,300
Assessment of academic qualifications by the CACB for graduates of an accredited school of architecture in Canada or the United States	\$110
OAA intern architect annual fee	\$145
Canadian Handbook of Practice	\$320
Mastering the Business of Architecture kit	\$160
Admission Course	\$375
Application fee for licence	\$275
Application fee for certificate of practice	\$250
<b>Architect Registration Examination Fees</b>	
These fees are listed in US dollars. Canadian applicants must pay the exchange rate plus GST. Exam fees cannot be refunded once an appointment to write has been set.	
Pre-design	\$102
General structures	\$102
Lateral forces	\$102
Mechanical and electrical systems	\$102
Building design/Materials and methods	\$102
Construction documents and services	\$102
Site planning	\$153
Building planning	\$153
Building technology	\$153

### Licence Fee

Annual licence fee renewal \$760

### Certificate of Practice Annual Fees

Annual certificate of practice renewal (1 architect) \$390

Annual certificate of practice renewal (2–4 architects) \$630

Annual certificate of practice renewal (5–10 architects) \$1,295

Annual certificate of practice renewal (11 or more architects) \$3,325

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## I. Third Parties

Name of Third Party	Relationship to Regulatory Body
Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB)	Assesses academic qualifications for both domestic and international applicants.
National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)	Develops and facilitates the Architect Registration Examination (ARE) to assess candidates.

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## J. Typical Length of the Registration Process

The registration process can require from one year to five years or more.

Currently, there is no limit to the length of time that individuals can remain as intern architects.

## K. Accredited Programs

The OAA does not accredit university programs in architecture. The CACB manages this process.

Three schools of architecture in Ontario have professional architecture degree programs that are accredited by the CACB.

- Carleton University, Ottawa
- University of Toronto
- University of Waterloo

The Architectural Science program at Ryerson University is a four-year degree program and is considered pre-professional studies. To pursue licensing from the OAA, individuals require further studies to attain a professional architecture degree.

The following schools in Canada outside of Ontario have CACB-accredited programs in architecture:

- Dalhousie University, Halifax
- McGill University, Montreal
- University of British Columbia, Vancouver
- University of Calgary
- Université Laval, Quebec City
- University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
- Université de Montréal

## **L. Internal Review/Appeal Process**

If an applicant wishes to appeal a decision involving his or her application, the Registrar evaluates the applicant's application package to ensure that all requirements have been met for the issuing of a licence.

If applicants have any issues regarding their work experience, they have the option of requesting an interview with the Experience Requirements Committee, which will make a determination that is binding on both the applicant and the Registrar.

The Registrar has never proposed to refuse an applicant a licence. However, if the Registrar were to propose to refuse a licence, the applicant may appeal to the Registration Committee. A tribunal (consisting only of architects) of the Registration Committee hears the appeal. If the tribunal agrees with the Registrar, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Ontario Divisional Court.

The Registration Committee is composed of:

- at least two elected members of the OAA council appointed to the committee by the council
- at least two members of the OAA who are not members of the council and who are appointed to the committee by the council.

## **4. BRIDGING PROGRAMS**

The OAA has a pilot mentoring program with the Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) that helps internationally trained applicants integrate into the architectural profession in Ontario (for example, by providing job-hunting skills). The first phase of the program began in 2006 with 16 participants. By the spring of 2008, 61 people will have been mentored. There are no fees for this program. This pilot program ends March 31, 2008.

## **5. MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS**

The OAA has a reciprocity agreement with all Canadian provincial and territorial licensing authorities with respect to the issuing of a licence. There is a separate reciprocity agreement with the United States for the issuing of a licence.

A reciprocal agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico is currently under development.

## **6. APPLICANTS' INTERACTIONS WITH REGULATORY BODY**

### **A. Nature and Frequency of Communication**

Most of the OAA's contact with applicants is by phone or e-mail or through personal visits. The frequency varies by applicant, and can be frequent.

### **B. Backlogs**

There is no backlog for licence applications.

### **C. Complaints Regarding the Registration Process**

The most frequent complaints from interns concern:

- lack of employment
- the existence of far too many websites with too much information for individuals to absorb, causing them to become confused, overwhelmed and frustrated.

With respect to employment, a number of interns state that they are unwilling to take entry-level positions when they are overqualified for the position.

## 7. CHANGES SINCE THE 2005 SURVEY

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration conducted a survey in 2005 to collect information about occupational regulatory bodies in Ontario.

A new examination, the Examination for Architects in Canada (ExAC), is under development and is intended to be implemented in late 2008.

## 8. REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

Definitions used in these tables:

**Alternative class of licence:** a class of licence that enables its holder to practise with limitations; additional registration requirements must be met in order to be fully licensed. The Ontario Association of Architects did not have an alternative class of licence in 2005 or 2006. Alternative classes of licence granted by the Ontario Association of Architects since 2007 are specified under the tables below.

**Applicant:** a person who has applied to start the process for entry to the profession.

**Applicant actively pursuing licensing:** Intern architects (IAs) paying the IA annual fee plus applicants who have completed their internship and are applying to be licensed as architects (members).

**Inactive applicant:** a cancelled IA.

**Intern architect (IA):** A person who is completing the requirements to obtain a licence as an architect. An IA is not permitted to call him/herself an architect or provide architectural services to the public.

**Member:** a person who is currently able to use the protected title or professional designation “architect.”

**Languages in which application information materials were available**

<b>Language</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
English	Yes	Yes	Yes
French	No	No	No
Other(s)			

**Countries where internationally educated applicants were initially trained in architecture**

<b>Applications Received</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Largest number	Iran	India	Iran
Second-largest number	Romania	China	India
Third-largest number	India	Iran	China
Fourth-largest number	China, Colombia, Egypt	Egypt	Egypt, Iraq
Fifth-largest number	Mexico	Colombia, Iraq	Ukraine

### Staff employed by the Ontario Association of Architects

Number of Staff	2005	2006	2007
Involved in registration process	3	3	4
Involved in appeals process	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in architecture (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

Members	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL
Total members <sup>1</sup>	1,392 <sup>2</sup>	477	311	366	2,546
Non-practising members <sup>3</sup>	11	2	1	0	14

<sup>1</sup> As of January 25, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The total number of members in Ontario includes 19 professional engineers grandfathered as architects.

<sup>3</sup> The OAA category of non-practising member is an architect with terms, conditions and limitations who cannot be involved in the practice of architecture.

### Applicants processed by the Ontario Association of Architects in 2005

<b>Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in architecture (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)</b>						
<b>In 2005 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Other Canadian Provinces</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>Other International</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
New applications received <sup>1</sup>	87	19	12	65	183	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	560	112	106	279	1,057	
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Applicants who became members	33	8	7	12	60	
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

<sup>1</sup> Applications for IA status, plus applications to be licensed as architects (members) by applicants who have completed their internship.

<sup>2</sup> This information not available until an Application for Licence is submitted.

### Applicants processed by the Ontario Association of Architects in 2006

<b>Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in architecture (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)</b>					
<b>In 2006 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Other Canadian Provinces</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>Other International</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
New applications received <sup>1</sup>	131	22	22	77	252
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	657	126	121	344	1,248
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who became members	49	7	7	12	75
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Applications for IA status, plus applications to be licensed as architects (members) by applicants who have completed their internship.

<sup>2</sup> This information not available until an Application for Licence is submitted.

### Applicants processed by the Ontario Association of Architects in 2007

<b>Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in architecture (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)</b>					
<b>In 2007 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Other Canadian Provinces</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>Other International</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
New applications received <sup>1</sup>	118	9	12	71	210
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	725	153	131	403	1,412
Inactive applicants	238	55	38	115	446
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who became members	42	9	7	10	68
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence <sup>3</sup> but were not issued a licence	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence <sup>3</sup>	11	2	1	0	14

<sup>1</sup> Applications for IA status, plus applications to be licensed as architects (members) by applicants who have completed their internship.

<sup>2</sup> This information not available until an Application for Licence is submitted.

<sup>3</sup> Non-practising membership: a class of licence that does not enable its holder to practise architecture.

## 9. SOURCES

Ontario Association of Architects and Settlement.Org, “Your Path to Becoming an Architect in Ontario: A partnership between OAA and Settlement.Org.”

<http://www.settlement.org/site/ecareermaps/arch/ontario/oa.html>. Last accessed: May 29, 2008.

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Last accessed: January 29, 2008.

Representatives of the Ontario Association of Architects met with staff of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner on October 1, 2007, to provide further information for this study.

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