



ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Oral Exam Candidate Guidebook

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Oral Exam | Candidate Guidebook

The oral exam assesses the candidate's ability to synthesize their knowledge, experience, and professional judgment into competent architectural practice in British Columbia. The exam is designed for Intern Architects AIBC, Broadly Experienced Applicants (BEA) and, in some cases, applicants reinstating registration of former architects.

This guidebook is intended to provide you with the information needed to determine whether you are eligible to take the oral exam, as well as how to apply, prepare, and take the exam. Additional information, including upcoming oral exam and application dates, and all associated forms, can be found on the [AIBC website](#).

Eligibility for the Oral Exam

All candidates for the oral exam must meet the following eligibility requirements.

If you are an **Intern Architect AIBC**:

- Completed at least 85% of approved experience hours in each category as outlined in the Regulatory Organizations of Architecture in Canada's [Internship in Architecture Program Manual – Fourth Edition](#) (PDF).
- Completed all required AIBC professional development courses*:
 - Architects and the Law
 - BC Building Code
 - Construction Administration
 - Professional Practice Standards and Ethics

If you are a **Broadly Experienced Applicant (BEA)**:

- Completed the Oral Assessment
- Completed all Oral Assessment panel recommendations and/or requirements
- Completed all required AIBC professional development courses*:
 - Architects and the Law
 - BC Building Code
 - Construction Administration
 - Professional Practice Standards and Ethics

**Completion of mandatory courses prior to the oral exam are not currently required, if Intern Architects AIBC have satisfied the requisite 85% completion of hours in each category and BEAs have successfully completed their Oral Assessment. This is a temporary relaxation of requirements until all AIBC courses are once again available.*

Applying for the Oral Exam

- The oral exam is offered three times a year in-person or virtually (on Zoom). Dates and type of delivery (in-person or virtual) are posted on the [AIBC website](#).
- Applicants who are taking a virtual exam are offered a 'system check' session prior to their exam to ensure their computers meet compatibility requirements for Zoom, as well as to ensure they are familiar with the Zoom platform features. More details are provided upon receipt of the application.
- Applications are accepted between the application opening and closing dates for each oral exam, as specified on the AIBC website.
- Before the application deadline, you must submit by e-mail to iap@aicbc.ca:
 - A completed [Oral Exam Application Form](#);
 - A project letter from your supervising architect of your selected project, outlining your role and level of involvement; and
 - A [photo identification form](#) (**only** if you have not submitted one within the last 5 years)
- After the application closing date, AIBC staff will contact you to confirm your eligibility and assigned oral exam date, along with further information, including instructions for submitting the oral exam fees online.
- Refer to [Schedule B: Fees, found in the AIBC Bylaws](#) for the oral exam fees.

Confidentiality and Compliance

Oral exam questions are **confidential**: you must not divulge any oral exam questions. Unauthorized possession, reproduction, or disclosure of examination materials is prohibited.

Some candidates may be required to undergo remediation as an outcome of the oral exam. Any remedial written submissions must not be plagiarized and must be referenced/cited appropriately.

Any violation of confidentiality or act of plagiarism will be reviewed by the AIBC and may impact your eligibility for registration. By partaking in this exam, you are agreeing to the conditions as set out in this Oral Exam Guidebook.

Withdrawing from the Oral Exam

Withdrawal up to three weeks after the application deadline

You may withdraw from the oral exam by e-mailing the AIBC. Your fee will be refunded, but you will be charged an administrative fee.

Withdrawal more than three weeks after the application deadline

You may withdraw from the oral exam, but your fee will not be refunded.

About the Oral Exam

The oral exam is intended to determine whether you are competent to practice architecture in British Columbia. During the exam, the examiners will evaluate how you apply the skills and knowledge that you have gained over the course of your education and work experience to your understanding of the regulations and other key concepts of practice in the province.

The exam is based on a series of questions that will allow you to demonstrate your competence. The questions range from short-answer questions to scenario-based questions that require more explanation. They are in four sections, which generally follow a project's lifecycle:

- Section A: Governance/ Professional Practice
- Section B: Design/Construction Documents/Municipal Regulations
- Section C: Construction Contract Administration
- Section D: Project Close Out

You will be expected to draw from your work experience to provide context for your answers to the questions. You are allowed to reference and share project drawings and related documentation to support your answers.

The examiners will be looking to see how you link your knowledge of architecture to real-world practice — whether through specific examples from projects you have worked on or through your general knowledge of architectural practice.

The examiners will not expect you to have an in-depth understanding of all details of practice. If you do not know the answer to a question, demonstrating an understanding of the underlying issues and proposing a way to find a solution to the problem may be acceptable as well. The level of competency required is that of entry-to-practice in British Columbia.

Oral Exam Preparation Workshop

Oral exam preparation workshops are offered three times a year. The workshops, which are offered virtually or in-person, provide an overview of the exam requirements and include a mock exam.

Oral exam candidates are **strongly encouraged** to attend. Supervising architects and mentors of intern architects are also welcome.

Workshop dates are listed on the [AIBC website](#).

What to Bring (and Not Bring) to the Oral Exam

1.0 Required Items

You **must** bring a copy of your project drawings (digital format for a virtual exam (i.e., PDF) and printed format for an in-person exam). Your drawings **must** include:

- Site Plan,
- Ground (Main) floor plan,
- 1 typical floor plan,
- 1 or 2 elevation and section drawings, and
- 1 or 2 detail drawings showing typical assemblies (e.g., roof to wall interface or building envelope detail drawings, preferably those depicted on the section drawing(s)).

2.0 Items Not Permitted

You may not bring the following items to the exam:

- Notes
- Resources
- Recording devices – candidates are not permitted to record the oral exam

If participating in a virtual oral exam format, your oral exam panel may ask to conduct a visual scan of your workstation.

Taking the Oral Exam

The oral exam lasts **approximately** 90–120 minutes. This includes about 60–75 minutes for questions and answers, 15 minutes for the examiners to deliberate, and 15 minutes for the examiners to provide feedback and results. Please note that these times may vary.

The panel includes three oral examiners: one chair and two panel examiners.

Occasionally, an observer may also attend an oral exam as part of training or for auditing purposes. The observer will not participate in the discussion or deliberation, and they will not influence the outcome of the exam. If an observer will be present during your exam, you will be advised ahead of time.

The oral exam begins with introductions. You will be asked to introduce yourself. The examiners and chair will introduce themselves as well. You will provide a brief history of your work experience, the type of project you have brought and your role in the project.

If at any point you are unclear about what the examiners are asking of you, please ask them to repeat or clarify the question.

Keep in mind that it is normal to feel nervous.

If, while you are responding to a question, the examiners determine that you have already provided a satisfactory answer, they may interrupt you and move on to the next question.

The examiners will prompt you when to share your project drawings. During an in-person exam, you will share your physical drawings. During a virtual exam, you will use the Zoom platform features to share your drawings virtually. You will use your project in answering questions (where applicable) to illustrate how you have applied knowledge to practice. This will help 'show' the examiners what you know.

You can refer to your project at any time if it helps in answering a question.

At the end of the oral exam, you will be asked to wait in the waiting room (in-person or virtual) while the examiners deliberate. When they conclude their deliberations, you will return to the exam room for your results.

Oral Exam Results

When you return to the exam room, the examiners will give you your result, which will fall into one of the following three categories:

- **Met:** You have demonstrated all competencies required to practise as an Architect AIBC. You have successfully completed the oral exam.
 - If you are an Intern Architect AIBC and you have completed all other requirements of the Internship in Architecture Program (IAP), you may submit an [Application for Registration Form](#) for registration as an Architect AIBC.
 - If you are a Broadly Experienced Applicant (BEA) and you have completed the other requirements, you may submit an [Application for Registration Form](#) for registration as an Architect AIBC.
- **Not Met – Remediation:** The examiners determined that you demonstrated a deficiency in one topic area that can be addressed through remediation, such as an additional course, self-directed learning/study, work experience, or a modified oral exam/focused interview. You must complete the remediation and provide evidence of completion to the AIBC before the requirement is fulfilled. Your examiners will specify what you need to do to satisfy remediation requirements.
- **Not Met:** You are required to retake the oral exam, as you did not sufficiently demonstrate the competencies required to practise as an Architect AIBC.

The rubric, including outcomes and next steps based on result, can be found in the following table:

	MET	NOT MET – REMEDIATION	NOT MET
OUTCOME	Correct answers for the significant majority of questions (e.g., 75%) in each topic.	Fails to meet the criteria in <u>one</u> topic area. Additional learning through remediation for that topic is required.	Significant knowledge gaps for multiple topics (two or more), OR shows lack of understanding regarding the implications of the responsibilities and actions of an architect.
NEXT STEP	Eligible to register as an Architect with the AIBC once all other requirements have been met.	Required to complete remediation. Remedial measures need to be validated via a written submission and/or a partial interview, which has been reviewed by AIBC and signed off by the individual's supervising architect/mentor.	Return for full oral exam with new panel.

You will receive a written summary of your result and any applicable feedback, including remediation, within 30 days of your oral exam.

Retaking the Oral Exam

Candidates who are required to retake the exam may apply to retake the exam, following the application process described on page two of this document.

Sample Questions to Use for Mock Oral Exam

The following are typical questions relating to the listed subjects, which you may use to guide your questions:

1. Design/Construction Documents/Municipal Regulations

- What information would you typically collect and review to start work on a project? What information should the client be expected to provide?
- What are an architect's responsibilities for cost estimating on a project? What are the ways that you can protect the client and yourself when estimating construction costs?
- How do you determine if a bid is compliant?

- d. When would the National Building Code of Canada (NBC), the British Columbia Building Code (BCBC) or Vancouver's Building Bylaw (VBBL) apply to a project?
- e. What are the letters of assurance and what responsibilities do they place on the Owner, Coordinating Registered Professional and Architect?
- f. Describe the ways in which the project you are presenting meets the Accessibility requirements of the building code.
- g. Using the project you are presenting, describe how the building envelope works to keep water out of the building, and vapour from condensing within the wall.
- h. Describe some Building Code issues you encountered on your project?

2. Construction Administration

- a. What shop drawings would you be expected to review for the project you are presenting?
- b. What are the architect's responsibilities in reviewing shop drawings?
- c. What assurances and procedures should an architect take before submitting a Certificate of Payment for a progress draw?
- d. What are the architect's responsibilities in certifying a progress claim for payment?
- e. Who is responsible for additional costs due to an error on the architect's drawings?

3. Project Close Out

- a. How do you determine Substantial Performance on a project? What events does the Declaration of Substantial Performance trigger?
- b. Can a portion of the lien holdback be used for deficiencies? Describe the process for establishing a deficiency holdback.

4. Professional Practice

- a. How is the architectural profession granted the right to be self-regulating?
- b. Who does the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct protect?
- c. Can an architect criticize another architect's work? If so, under what circumstances?
- d. A client has come to you asking that you do the design portion of a project for a considerably reduced fee. You expect that this work would lead to more projects with this client. Do you take the project? How should you handle this situation in a professional manner?

Resources & References

Below is a list of resources and references for oral exam preparation. Please note it is not exhaustive.

Professional Governance Act, Bylaws, Code of Conduct

- [*Professional Governance Act*](#)
- [Professional Governance General Regulation](#)
- [Architects Regulation](#)
- [AIBC Bylaws](#) (includes Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct)
- [AIBC Bulletins](#)
- AIBC Course: [Professional Practice Standards & Ethics](#)

Contracts, Agreements, Office Management

- AIBC Course: [Architects and the Law](#)
- AIBC Course: Business Fundamentals (*in development, not yet available*)
- [AIBC Tariff of Fees for Architectural Services](#)
- [AIBC Standard Form of Contract 6C Between the Client and Consultant](#)

Design, Documentation, Codes, Building Regulations

- AIBC Course: [BC Building Code](#) (*in development, not released yet*)
- [BC Building Code](#)
- [Guide to the Letters of Assurance in the BC Building Code](#)
- [AIBC Practice Guidelines](#)

Construction & Contract Administration

- AIBC Course: [Construction Administration](#)
- [CCDC Contracts and Guides](#)
- [British Columbia Builders Lien Act](#)

Additional General Resources

- [AIBC website](#)
- AIBC e-newsletter, [Connected](#)
- [AIBC Regulatory Review](#)
- [AIBC Professional Conduct](#) / [Disciplinary Decisions](#)
- [Professional Development offerings](#) by AIBC and external providers