



IIDC presents: Can you call yourself an “Interior Designer”?

Over the next several newsletters, IIDC will share the basic information with you on why and how you can become a Registered Interior Designer and Registered Residential Interior Designer with the State of Illinois. Registration with the state is a requirement to use the title “Interior Designer” or “Residential Interior Designer”. The series topics include:

1. ***What’s in it for me?***
2. ***A terrible thing to waste.***
3. ***Study, study, study.***
4. ***Congratulations...but you’re not done yet!***
5. ***Keep it real.***

If you miss any of the series along the way, you can visit IIDC’s website below to catch up.

What’s in it for me?

1. ***Credentials, credentials, credentials.*** Would you hire a lawyer that has not passed the bar? Or a doctor who has not passed his boards? By becoming a registered Interior Designer or registered Residential Interior Designer, you have proven that you have met the minimum industry standards for education and experience through NCIDQ and the State of Illinois. You have proven your professional status within the state.
2. ***Check me out.*** You are committed to your profession. You have worked very hard to get to where you are, and now this will be recognized by the State of Illinois.
3. ***People just don’t understand*** (that I do more than just pick finishes). You are raising the bar for your profession. Through registration, Interior Designers gain recognition from their extended project teams (architects, engineers, and contractors – all of whom need a license to practice.) as well as greater respect from brokers and clients.
4. ***Looking good.*** You will be ahead of your peers when a future employer sees that you have passed an industry standard test and have been registered by the state.
5. ***Be all that you can be.*** But I work at a large firm, does it matter? Yes!
 - a. You may not always work for that firm.
 - b. Many firms look for certification and registration for advancement in the firm.
 - c. You may move to a state with similar laws in place that would accept your registration in Illinois as reciprocity to be registered in their state.
 - d. You may someday start your own firm and will want your registration to set you apart from your competition.

How do I get started?

Next time: A terrible thing to waste.

Find more information:

Illinois Interior Design Coalition (IIDC) www.iidcpac.org or info@iidcpac.org

National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) www.ncidq.org

Illinois Department of Professional Regulation – Interior Design <http://www.idfpr.com/dpr/WHO/intd.asp>



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A terrible thing to waste.

1. ***Education and work go hand in hand.***
 - a. The NCIDQ and CQRID exams provide for many routes on the path to a Certificate.
 - b. Qualifications for the exams are based on your total Semester/Credit hours plus your cumulative supervised work experience. This can start while you are still in school!
 - i. For instance, to qualify for NCIDQ, if you have a Bachelor degree, work experience can count as soon as 96 of the 120 semester hours or 144 of the 180 quarter hours are completed.
 - ii. Up to half of the work experience can be obtained while you are receiving your education.
2. ***Tracking your education.*** Do this while you are still in school. Programs can close and staff can change making it difficult to collect the information you need after you have graduated.
 - a. Request two (2) copies of your transcript and keep them in a safe place.
 - b. Print and compete two (2) copies of the Illinois Registered Interior Designer application’s “ED” form and have it signed by the registrar’s office. The application is available on the state website below. Download the Interior Designer/Residential Interior Designer - Acceptance of Exam form.
3. ***Tracking your Work Experience.*** Do this in real time. Similar with schools, firms can close, merge and staff move on making it difficult to collect the information after you have left a firm.
 - a. Ask employers if they have an NCIDQ Certificate Holder you will be working with prior to accepting a job if you plan to take the NCIDQ exam.
 - b. Keep copies of your timesheets.
 - c. Log your time into the IDEP (Interior Design Experience Program) website. To find out more about IDEP go to <http://www.ncidq.org/idep>
 - d. Ask Employer to fill out the Illinois Registered Interior Designer application’s “VE-IND” form. The application is available on the state website below. Download the Interior Designer/Residential Interior Designer - Acceptance of Exam form.

I have completed my education and work experience, now what?

Next time: Study, study, study.

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National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) www.ncidq.org

Council for Qualification of Residential Interior Designers (CQRID) www.cqrid.org

Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) www.accredit-id.org

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Study, study, study.

1. ***The BIG EXAM.*** You have completed all of your education and work requirements and now you must get ready to take the “BIG EXAM”, this can be either the NCIDQ or the CQRID.
 - a. NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualification) writes the exam most commonly referenced by Interior Designers both residential and commercial.
 - b. CQRID (Council for Qualification of Residential Interior Designers) writes an exam specifically for residential interior designers.
2. ***Which one?*** If you plan to practice only residential interior design, you should take the CQRID exam. If you plan to practice both residential and commercial interior design, you should take the NCIDQ exam. Note, this is specific to Illinois. If you think you will move out of state, contact them directly to confirm what their laws are and how to qualify. Most states only accept NCIDQ so for the purpose of these articles, NCIDQ will be our focus. If you have questions about CQRID, feel free to contact IIDC or CQRID at the websites below.
3. ***What to study.*** The NCIDQ exam concentrates on the health, safety and welfare aspects of design including general code compliance.
4. ***What to expect.*** The format of the NCIDQ exam is 3 sections (2 multiple choice and one practicum) in 2 full days. The exam is given twice a year.
 - a. Friday
 - i. Section I – Principals and Practices in the morning
 - ii. Section II – Contract Documents and Construction Administration in the afternoon
 - b. Saturday
 - i. Section III – Design Practicum; plan in the morning and reflected ceiling, millwork section and millwork elevation in afternoon.
5. ***Other tips to help prepare:***
 - a. Time management is the key to success on the test. Remember what Mom always said, don’t skip breakfast and get plenty of rest!
 - b. You can take the test multiple times if you need to. Some jurisdictions have a statute of limitation from start to finish. Illinois does not.
 - c. But I haven’t drafted since my first semester in school! Don’t worry, the practicum portion is done by hand sketching (CAD is not used because there are many types of software available and adding a CAD component would raise the cost of the exam. Practice this so that when you get started it is as comfortable as CAD is for you.
 - d. Resources, resources, resources. There are study guides and courses available to help you study from NCIDQ, ASID and IIDA. Look for help within the industry

like notes from others who have taken the exam. Purchase sample exams from NCIDQ.

- e. Good news! The average pass rates are:
 - i. Section I – 67%
 - ii. Section II – 66%
 - iii. Section III – 70%

6. ***YOU CAN DO IT!***

Wow, that was something. What's next?

Next time: Congratulations...but you're not done yet!

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Illinois Interior Design Coalition (IIDC) www.iidcpac.org or info@iidcpac.org

National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) www.ncidq.org

NCIDQ Study Guide Information www.ncidq.org/publications/examstudypubs.htm

Council for Qualification of Residential Interior Designers (CQRID) www.cqrid.org

Illinois Department of Professional Regulation – Interior Design www.idfpr.com/dpr/WHO/intd.asp

American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) Illinois Chapter www.asidillinois.com/

ASID's STEP NCIDQ Preparation Course www.asid.org/bcdevelopment/step/

International Interior Design Association (IIDA) Illinois Chapter www.iida-ilchap.org/



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Congratulations...but you’re not done yet!

1. ***Big Brother needs to know.*** Now you must register with your state!
2. ***How do I do this in Illinois?***
 - a. Meet the educational and work requirements to sit for NCIDQ or CQRID exams as discussed in our last topic, “Study, study, study.”
 - b. Take and pass the NCIDQ or CQRID exams.
 - c. Request that your test results be sent to the state.
 - d. Send in an application and check to the Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulation...who? (They govern the Illinois Interior Design Title Act which we will get into a little later). Link here to download the Licensee Application/Forms (upper right side of the web page) <http://www.idfpr.com/dpr/WHO/intd.asp>
 - e. ***You are official.*** You will then receive a document with your name, the Registered Interior Designer title, and your license number. A listing of all professions and individuals registered is on the official state website www.idfpr.com
3. ***There is more to this than meets the eye.*** This is a critical component for keeping our profession at its highest level. We talked about the Title Act above. A title act prohibits anyone not registered by the state from representing or identifying him/herself as an “Interior Designer” or “Residential Interior Designer”. It assures regulation of design affecting the public’s health, safety and welfare. What happens if this is not protected? If the Title Act is not protected, we lose our status as a design professional. Remember, the International Building Code (IBC) directly references “design professionals” within the code. If we have no laws, we have no profession and we cannot practice. We could lose our positions, our credentials, and our industry as we know it. Too dramatic? Not really. Every time the Title Act comes up for renewal, many organizations challenge it. We constantly need to support the title act to protect what we have.

Yes, I am there! I rule! Now what?

Next time: Keep it real.

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Keep it real.

1. ***Get involved!*** Follow what is happening through organizations to keep improving our profession.
 - a. Continue to support the design industry through activities, fundraisers, committees, volunteering!
 - b. Consider joining ASID or IIDA. See below for websites to get further information.
 - c. Attend continuing education courses to stay current on your education.
2. ***Don’t forget about the watchdog!*** Help IIDC to help you.
 - i. IIDC is a not-for-profit political action committee whose mission is to protect the public’s health, safety and welfare through the integrity of the Illinois Interior Design Title Act.
 - ii. We work with lobbyists and lawyers to protect our title act and to protect our profession.
 - iii. We watch what is going on in other states and how that may affect us.
 - iv. Attend fundraisers like IIDC’s Mini Masters at the Mart. Volunteer to help or bring your colleagues, clients, industry contacts!
 - v. ASID and IIDA frequently host events that also benefit IIDC. Attending these events also offers support.

We hope this series of articles has clarified this very confusing topic. If you are interested in a presentation to your office, school or group, contact IIDC. IIDC does not charge to present this information and considers these presentations a top priority. These presentations are the best way to get current information and have your questions answered personally.

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