

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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Introduction

The Broadly Experienced Foreign Architecture (BEFA) program streamlines the process for foreign architects to become certified for licensure in Canada.

The program was developed in partnership with Architecture Canada, the provincial and territorial regulators and the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB). It is a bilingual, pan-Canadian program. Funding for its development was provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

The BEFA program assesses the competence of foreign architects against pan-Canadian standards of practice.

A foreign architect can apply for BEFA certification if he can demonstrate that he meets **all** of the following mandatory requirements:

- ✓ Has been formally educated as an architect and completed an architectural education/degree.
- ✓ Has been registered/licensed and have practiced as an architect in a foreign jurisdiction.
- ✓ If registration/licensure was not required to practice as an architect in the jurisdiction(s) of origin, the equivalents to registration/licensure in that/those jurisdiction(s) may be considered.
- ✓ Has at least seven (7) years of post-registration/licensure experience in architecture within the last 10 years. There are no geographic restrictions on where this experience was gained.
- ✓ Has obtained at least six months of relevant Canadian architectural work experience* (by the time of an assessment interview). **This experience must have been gained under the personal supervision and direction of a registered/licensed architect within the Canadian province or territory in which candidates intend to be licensed/registered and be current – gained within three years of the date scheduled for an assessment interview.**
- ✓ Relevant Canadian architectural work experience is that which exposes candidates to the practice and regulatory requirements of architecture in Canada.

Application Process

1. Eligibility

To apply to the BEFA program, candidates must pay an eligibility assessment fee and submit the following documents:

- Proof of architectural education
- Proof of licensure information
- A resume or curriculum vitae (CV)

Proof of architectural education may take the form of academic transcripts, a copy of a degree or certificate or diploma, etc., (for the most senior architectural degree completed).

Applications are completed and submitted online. In addition to uploading the supporting documentation for the eligibility application, it is required to send, via mail or courier, **certified true copies** of the originals, as follows:

- a) Proof of architectural education;
- b) Proof of either:
 - licensure/registration in a jurisdiction outside Canada; **OR**
 - the equivalents to registration/licensure in that /those jurisdiction(s), which may be considered.

If the documents listed above are not in English or French, a certified true copy of an official translation for each document is also required. The institution which issued the original document, or a lawyer or a notary may certify the true copies. If certified true copies of the required documentation cannot be provided, a statutory declaration will be considered. A lawyer or notary can provide this service in all provinces and territories. (In the Province of Ontario, a Commissioner of Oaths may also provide this service.)

Once all documentation is received, a BEFA applicant file is created and the applicant's eligibility is verified by the BEFA coordinator.

If successful, the coordinator will contact the applicant to confirm the eligibility. Upon receipt of the self-assessment fee, applicants are given access to the BEFA online self-assessment application.

Project Resume Template

The Project Resume template provides an overview of an architect's career. It allows the applicant to highlight his major projects on which he was directly involved in and to link them to the required competencies outlined below.

2. Self-assessment

Eligible applicants are required to assess themselves in relation to Canadian standards of practice in the following 12 competency areas:

1. Programming
2. Site and environmental analysis
3. Schematic design
4. Engineering systems – structural, mechanical, electrical, civil
5. Building cost analysis
6. Code research
7. Design development
8. Construction documents
9. Bidding and contract negotiation
10. Construction phase – office and site
11. Management of the project
12. Professionalism and professional practice

For each competency there is a corresponding template that must be completed. The candidate must evaluate his knowledge and experience in relation to each competency, and then assign a score based on the following definitions:

0. No Knowledge

1. **Remember:** recalling, retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory; remembering facts and information through memorization in approximately the form in which they were learned;
2. **Understand:** the meaning of, explaining in own words, interpreting information;
3. **Apply:** carrying out, implementing a task, using information previously learned in new situations; using data, methods, and principles previously learned to solve a problem or carry out a task;
4. **Analyze:** breaking material or concepts into parts, determining how the parts relate to each other or to an overall structure or purpose; researching elements of a process, problem, organization, system and the relations between/among them;

5. **Evaluate:** appraising, assessing a plan or process based on specific standards and criteria for a given purpose; making judgements based on criteria and standards and
6. **Create:** putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizes elements into a new pattern or structure.

Supporting portfolio

The candidate will be required to build a portfolio, based on personal experience, to demonstrate knowledge and skills. The portfolio must include projects in which he was directly involved in, while in an architectural practice (within the past 10 years). It is important that the examples selected relate directly to the competencies and that they directly address all components that are included within a particular competency area.

The project examples must also provide evidence of specific experience rather than broad practice areas, and each example must clearly indicate the scope, size, and complexity of built projects.

Submission review

The BEFA coordinator reviews submissions for completeness. This review may take up to eight weeks or more to verify the submitted documents.

When a submission has passed the BEFA coordinator's review, it is forwarded to an assessment panel of registered/licensed architects for consideration.

Panel members may recommend remedial action before proceeding further. They may ask to re-submit portions of a self-assessment application or they may determine that the applicant requires further work experience; they may also recommend to withdraw the application.

If the panel accepts the self-assessment submission, the applicant will be invited to an interview.

3. Interview

Upon receipt of the interview fee, an interview is scheduled, and is conducted by the panel members that assessed the self-assessment submission. The candidate is required to bring up to three projects (**in a hardcopy format**) to the interview session.

After the interview takes place, the panel will make a decision and the CACB office will communicate that decision to the candidate, in writing.

If successful, the candidate will be granted a BEFA certificate. When BEFA Certification is issued by the CACB, it serves as a recommendation for recognition as an equivalent to successful completion of the Canadian Education, Experience, and Examination Standards that are in place for licensure by a provincial or territorial licencing body. With the BEFA Certificate, candidates can apply for licensure to the Provincial/Territorial Association they have chosen to register with.

Appeal Process

Candidates have the right to appeal if they are denied certification, or they are required to take post interview remedial actions. Upon acceptance of a request to appeal, and payment of the appeal cost, a new panel is invited to assess the same documents (and, if applicable, re-interview). This panel's decision is final.

Language

All applicants must be proficient in English or French. To practice in Québec, knowledge of French is required. The documents submitted for review can be in either English or French. If they are in a language other than English or French, an official translation must be provided and the translation must be certified as a true copy.

For the panel interview, applicants choose in advance the language (French or English) in which they want the interview conducted.

Costs

Application fees

The cost of the BEFA certification application is outlined in the [Fees Schedule webpage](#).

The fees are paid at the beginning of each stage and are non-refundable.

Applicants may be required to pay additional fees should it be determined that they require a re-assessment, based on the results of the self-assessment application or the panel interview.

Expenses

Applicants are responsible for all the expenses they incur when applying to the BEFA program. Expenses could include translation costs, certification or notary costs, and travel and accommodation costs if travelling is required to attend the panel interview.

For more information

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