5

The Regulatory Organization

BETH **HARMON-VAUGHAN, FIIDA**

Modern professions have emerged as occupations that offer a unique value to the society in which they exist. By these definitions, interior design has developed into a true modern profession over the past 30 years. It has experienced growing demand for sophisticated services, which enhance clients' quality of life as well as their bottom line. Through this growth, interior design has defined itself as a true profession, sharing characteristics of most other professions with a unique body of knowledge and theoretical foundation, standards for formal education, testing of candidates for basic knowledge and skills as entrée into the profession, ethical standards, and legal recognition. Professions begin to define themselves through an institutional infrastructure, which develops and monitors standards of practice for the profession.

For interior design, two key aspects of the professional infrastructure are the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER) and the National Council for Interior Design Qualifications (NCIDQ). FIDER is a specialized accreditor whose mission is to establish standards for post-secondary education and then evaluate and accredit programs based on those standards. NCIDQ develops and administers an examination for qualified, entry-level designers seeking professional status. The examination tests minimum competence in the theory, knowledge, and skills necessary to enter the professional practice of interior design and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. The examination is required for professional status in the North American interior design associations as well as license in those American states or Canadian provinces where interior design licensing is available.

Both FIDER and NCIDQ subscribe to the definition of interior design which has been endorsed by the International Interior Design Association, the American Society of Interior Designers, Interior Designers of Canada, and the Interior Design Educators Council. FIDER and NCIDQ consider this definition as they address their missions of accreditation and testing. The definition states that the professional interior designer is qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior