

necessary to enter the practice of interior design. The standards are structured around a series of educational outcomes rather than a prescribed length of time or number of credit hours. The panel of visitors assigned to conduct the on-site program review is responsible for evaluating evidence of these outcomes against the standards. The single set of standards focuses on theory, method, technical foundation and skills necessary to practice interior design, as well as 30 credit-hours of general education.

Beginning January 2000, new programs and programs applying for re-accreditation will be evaluated using the new FIDER 2000 Standards. By 2002 all FIDER-accredited programs must comply with the standards, including those programs currently accredited as preprofessional, two-year programs.

The Accreditation Process

Accreditation is initiated when a program applies to FIDER and meets the minimum standards for application. Once the application is accepted, the program prepares and submits a standardized self-study. When the self-study is received, FIDER assigns an evaluation team comprised of a three-person panel of qualified educators and practitioners, and schedules the site visit. Program evaluation occurs through a site visit conducted by the evaluation team. Site visits are usually three days in length. During this time the panel of visitors evaluates samples of student work and meets with faculty, students, administrators, and advisory board. Specific program outcomes are reviewed against FIDER standards. At the conclusion of the visit, the team prepares a written evaluation. The team report, with comments and recommendations, is sent to the FIDER Evaluation Committee and is then forwarded to the Accreditation Commission for a final accreditation decision. The commission may grant a maximum six-year accreditation, or it may deny accreditation, depending on the program's level of compliance with the standards. The time frame for the initial accrediting process can be 12 to 18 months. Once the term of accreditation has expired, the program must be reevaluated using the same process to make certain it continues to meet standards and remains current with the changing demands of the profession. Volunteer interior design practitioners and educators supported by a professional staff conduct the FIDER accreditation process.

NCIDQ

The primary mission

The primary mission of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification is to develop and administer an examination which tests minimum competency to enter the professional practice of interior design. Through the examination process, it serves to identify to the public those interior designers who have met the minimum standards for professional practice by passing the NCIDQ examination. The council endeavors to maintain the most advanced examining procedures, and continually updates the examination to reflect expanding professional knowledge and skills. It seeks the acceptance of the NCIDQ examination as a universal standard by which to measure the competency of interior designers to practice as professionals. NCIDQ is the only examination acknowledged by the International Interior Design Association, American Society of Interior Designers, Interior Designers of Canada, and the Interior Design Educators Council. In addition to responsibilities for examination, NCIDQ is charged with defining, researching, and updating bodies of knowledge, conducting field surveys, analyzing candidate performance, evaluating subject areas and item validity, developing and pretesting questions and problems, improving scoring, implementing grading and jurying procedures, reviewing education and practice requirements, and identifying public health, safety, and welfare issues.

To sit for the examination, the candidate must apply to NCIDQ and meet education and experience requirements. Once the application is accepted, the candidate is eligible to sit for the next scheduled examination session. The exam is structured as a two-day test. The first day is multiple-choice tests, which examine knowledge of codes, standards, and technical aspects of interior design. The second-day tests are practicum problems in which knowledge is tested through application. The exam is offered twice annually at proctored test sites throughout North America. Completed exams are sent to jury sites and scored by trained review teams. The candidate may retake those sections that were not completed successfully.

History

Established in the late 1960s to issue credentials to qualified professional interior design practitioners, the council has been in effect since 1972. It was