



April 29, 2022

Department of Financial and Professional Regulation  
Attention: Craig Cellini  
320 West Washington, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Springfield, IL 62786

Dear Mr. Cellini:

On behalf of the 15,000 members of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), I want to express our appreciation for the opportunity to comment on the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's (DFPR) proposed rules—68 Ill. Adm. Code 1275—implementing Public Act 102-0284 Landscape Architecture Registration Act.

ASLA believes that the regulation of the landscape architecture profession in every state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories is essential to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. We support Illinois reinstating the regulation of landscape architects and joining the 49 other states and the District of Columbia in regulating landscape architects.

As you'll read below, we request that you consider aligning Illinois regulations with several of the recommendations in the newly adopted Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB) Uniform Licensure Standard for Landscape Architecture ("Uniform Standard"). Moving in this direction will help to bring more consistency in state licensure and registration requirements and help to clarify and streamline the proposed rules.

Recently, CLARB adopted the "Uniform Standard" as model guidance. The goal of the "Uniform Standard" is to provide a set of recommendations for licensure that landscape architectural licensure boards can adopt and implement to create common, consistent regulatory requirements across jurisdictions. With consistent requirements for education, experience, and examination, registration boards can reduce confusion and barriers to entry for candidates. ASLA, as a stakeholder in the profession's regulation, supports efforts to create uniform and defensible standards and improve the profession's mobility model in all jurisdictions.

We recommend the following amendments to 68 Ill. Adm. Code 1275:

**Section 1275.20 Approved Programs**

Our recommended language below would simplify the rules and move Illinois into greater alignment with objectives of the "Uniform Standard."



We support DFPR's determination that LAAB and LAAC accreditation encompasses the preferred criteria for education. However, as noted below we recommend incorporating your proposed subsection (d) into our newly proposed subsection (a). Additionally, we are concerned the legacy language in subsection (a) is unnecessary and potentially conflicting with current LAAB- and LAAC-developed accreditation standards. Our proposed language below would recognize an approved program as one accredited by LAAB or LAAC, or their international equivalent as approved by the Board. Furthermore, our language would offer the possibility of alternative educational pathways for those without an accredited landscape architecture degree.

We recommend striking the original subsection (a) rule language and inserting and reordering language as follows:

- (a) The Department of Financial and Professional Regulation-Division of Professional Regulation (Division) has determined that landscape architecture programs accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) or the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Accreditation Council (CSLAAC) are considered to meet the minimum criteria for education programs and are, therefore, approved, subject to review.
- (b) In determining whether a program shall be approved, the Division shall take into consideration, but not be bound by, accreditation or approval by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board.
- (c) The Division has determined that all landscape architecture programs accredited or approved by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board as of January 1, 1998 meet the minimum criteria set forth in this Section and are, therefore, approved.<sup>1</sup>
- (d) An applicant shall have obtained or completed the following education in landscape architecture:
  - 1) A degree in landscape architecture from a program accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) or the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Accreditation Council (CSLAAC); or
  - 2) satisfy the alternative education requirements set forth in Section 1275.30 (b).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We've included subsection (c), but question whether it is duplicative of subsection (a).

<sup>2</sup> See our proposed Experience requirements below - Section 1275.30 (b)



- 3) An applicant who gained their Baccalaureate education outside the United States and is not LAAC accredited, shall have the education evaluated, at their expense. Applicants shall obtain the forms from the Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) at <https://www.ece.org/> and have the evaluation sent from ECE to the Division for review by the Board. The review of the transcripts by the Board will be to determine substantial equivalency to the educational requirements set forth in Section 1275.200 (1).

### **Section 1275.30 Experience**

ASLA believes practical experience, under the guidance and supervision of a licensed landscape architect, is necessary to provide real-world application of skills learned through a professional education. Therefore, we respectfully request the proposed rules be amended to require candidates, with an LAAB or LAAC accredited degree, obtain at least one of the two years of experience under the direct supervision of a licensed or registered landscape architect.

While practice overlap exists with architects and professional engineers, licensed and registered landscape architects have their own unique knowledge, skills, and abilities. As currently proposed, an applicant could obtain all their required experience under the direct supervision of an architect or professional engineer. Thus, weakening the regulatory intent of “landscape architecture experience,” placing Illinois out of alignment with national regulatory standards, and potentially creating barriers to mobility for registrants.

Additionally, rules permitting “teaching landscape architecture in an approved program” and “conducting or participating in research in landscape architecture in an approved program...” should not be considered “satisfactory experience.” We believe it is problematic to suggest an applicant who solely teaches or solely conducts or participates in research would gain sufficient practical experience to understand the health, safety, and welfare impacts of the profession.

We also find concerning provisions in Section 1275.30 (b) of the proposed rules. Subsection (b) is ambiguous, stating “but not be limited to” and providing conflicting rules depending upon if the experience is obtained in-state or outside of Illinois. As written, experience obtained outside of Illinois must be under an individual who has legal authorization to practice landscape architecture, whereas the proposed rules for in-state experience may be obtained under any individual who is a licensed or registered landscape architect, licensed architect, or licensed professional engineer. The proposed rule ought to be simplified and consistent for all applicants by requiring at least one year of experience under a licensed or registered landscape architect.



To address the above listed concerns and to simplify the rules, we suggest striking subsections (a) – (f) and replacing it with the following:

- a) For applicants with an accredited degree, have completed two years of experience in the regulated practice of landscape architecture, with at least one year under the direct supervision of a licensed or regulated landscape architect. If an applicant completes only one year under the direct supervision of a licensed or regulated landscape architect, then the second year of experience must be completed under the direct supervision of a licensed professional engineer or licensed architect.
  
- b) In lieu of a degree in landscape architecture accredited by LAAB, LAAC, or their international equivalent, an applicant must obtain eight years of experience in the regulated practice of landscape architecture. At least half of the eight years of experience must be earned under the direct supervision of a licensed or registered landscape architect. All experience shall be under the direct supervision of a licensed or registered landscape architect, licensed architect, or licensed professional engineer
  - 1) If an applicant holds a non-accredited degree or certificate in landscape architecture, then the applicant may be credited with one (1) year of experience for each year of schooling completed up to a maximum of four (4) years of credited experience. At least half of the remaining years of experience must be earned under the direct supervision of a licensed or registered landscape architect. All experience shall be under the direct supervision of a licensed or registered landscape architect, licensed architect, or licensed professional engineer; or
  
  - 2) If an applicant holds any degree or certificate, then the applicant may be credited with six (6) months of experience for each one (1) year of schooling completed up to a maximum of two (2) years of credited experience. At least half of the remaining years of experience must be earned under the direct supervision of a licensed or registered landscape architect. All experience shall be under the direct supervision of a licensed or registered landscape architect, licensed architect, or licensed professional engineer
  
- c) For purposes of 225 ILCS 316/45-(a)(2), to be considered “proof of experience for registration as approved by rule,” an applicant must gain experience in the following practice domains to ensure competency necessary to protect the public and the environment:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The practice domains are consistent with and are reflective of the content of the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (L.A.R.E.).



- 1) Project and Construction Management: includes pre-project management, project management, bidding, construction, and maintenance;
  - 2) Inventory and Analysis: includes site inventory, physical analysis, and contextual analysis;
  - 3) Design: includes stakeholder process, master planning, and site design;
  - 4) Grading, Drainage, and Construction Documentation: includes site preparation plans, general plans and details, specialty plans, and specifications.
- d) Proof of experience must be submitted on forms provided by the Division or as part of a Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB) Record.

### **Section 1275.60 Endorsement**

ASLA believes requirements for endorsement should facilitate the interstate practice of professional landscape architecture and protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. Therefore, we request clarification on subsection b) related to applicants with education outside the United States and Canada. This language is not only duplicative of language in Section 1275.40, but also does not clearly convey its relationship and necessity to "Endorsement."

Furthermore, ASLA strongly objects to subsection (c). Passing the Landscape Architecture Registration Exam (LARE) is a nationwide requirement to become a landscape architect in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and is a core tenet of CLARB's Uniform Standard. Such a possible exemption to that universal standard should not be granted. The state's primary objective for registration of landscape architects is a need to verify the qualifications of individuals who have an impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the state's citizenry. The provision, Section 1275.60 (c), as proposed is subjective and cannot be fairly applied to all applicants. Additionally, there is potential for this provision to introduce bias and corruption to the registration process. All applicants ought to be evaluated solely on their education, experience, and examination qualifications. Therefore, we strongly ask 1275.60 (c) be struck from the proposed rules:

~~e) The Division may, upon the recommendation of the Board, waive a portion of the examination requirements after consideration of the quality of an applicant's education and experience, including whether he or she has graduated from an approved program, has achieved special honors or awards, has had relevant articles published in professional journals, has participated in the writing of textbooks relating to landscape architecture, and any other attribute the Board accepts as evidence that the applicant has outstanding and proven ability in the practice of landscape architecture.~~



### **Section 1275.65 Inactive Status**

Subsection 1275.65(c) necessitates a technical alignment with 225 ILCS 316/15(a). The public law states that “No person shall use the title "registered landscape architect" or "landscape architect" without being so registered by the Department.” The proposed rule neglects to include “landscape architect” and should be amended as follows:

c) Any person whose registration is on inactive status shall not use the title “registered landscape architect” or “landscape architect” in the state of Illinois.

### **Continuing Education Requirements**

Finally, ASLA strongly supports reinstating the continuing education requirement for all licensed and registered landscape architects. ASLA believes in requiring continuous learning to advance professional competency. Each individual’s deliberate pursuit of professional growth and development recognizes both changing environmental awareness and emerging knowledge and technology. This growth is central to professional practice, public health, safety, and welfare, and the ability to respond to the needs of the natural and built environment. Therefore, we request that the continuing education provisions be reinstated.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations on the proposed regulations. We look forward to working with you to finalize regulatory rules and fully restore the registration of landscape architects in Illinois. For questions regarding our recommendations, please feel free to contact me at [ehbron@asla.org](mailto:ehbron@asla.org) or 202-216-2324 or Bradley Rawls at [brawls@asla.org](mailto:brawls@asla.org) or 202-898-2370.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Hebron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Hebron  
Director, State Government Affairs

cc: Adam A. De Foor-White, President, Illinois ASLA