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IDEP

Guide for Supervisors and Mentors

August 2007

Interior Design Experience Program

The Interior Design Experience Program (IDEP) is a monitored, documented experience program administered by NCIDQ for entry-level interior designers. NCIDQ believes the path to professionalism includes interior design education followed by diverse work experience, the NCIDQ Examination, and where required, registration/licensure by the jurisdiction.

Prospective NCIDQ Examination candidates must complete an established number of hours of interior design work experience to qualify for the exam depending on their education. In addition, state licensing boards and provincial associations require proof of high-quality, diversified work experience for licensure/registration.

IDEP serves as a framework for earning the work experience necessary to qualify for the NCIDQ Examination and registration/licensure. The program provides a structure for the transition between formal education and professional practice, recognizing the differences between the classroom and the workplace.

A typical IDEP participant with a four-year interior design degree who works fulltime can complete the program in two years, although fulltime work is not required. A participant with a three-year or associate's degree may be required to complete one additional year of experience within IDEP.

How Does IDEP Work?

The foundation of IDEP is on-the-job training in six major competency areas of interior design. The **participant** must complete a specific number of hours of direct work, observation and supplemental education in each of these areas:

- Programming
- Schematic Design
- Design Development
- Contract Documents
- Contract Administration
- Professional Practice

Applicable experience includes:

- Working directly in a competency area.
- Observing others who are engaged in such work.
- Attending lectures, seminars and continuing education courses (up to 10% of total hours).

The participant and his or her direct **supervisor** work together to ensure the participant gains broad, well-rounded experience. The participant tracks his or her own progress through the program, and the supervisor validates this progress through periodic review and approval.

To supplement this comprehensive on-the-job training, the participant also meets with a **mentor** several times a year to get a "big picture" perspective on his or her progress, goals and career outlook.

Over the course of the program, a participant may have more than one employer, more than one supervisor and/or more than one mentor.

The program costs $225 US per participant, payable in three installments of $75 (application, midpoint and completion). The participant is responsible for paying all fees. Some employers pay them as an employee benefit. Beginning in 2008, the program cost increases to $255, payable in three $85 installments.

Participants

Who is the Participant?

The participant is an entry-level interior designer seeking well-rounded professional training. Participants are recent graduates of interior design programs, who typically have substantial academic knowledge but limited practical experience.

Individuals must meet NCIDQ's exam eligibility requirements for education in order to participate in IDEP.

What are the Participant's Responsibilities?

The participant is chiefly responsible for his or her own success in IDEP. The participant is expected to:

- Find his or her job and IDEP supervisor.
- Select his or her IDEP mentor.
- Track hours worked in the competency areas.
- Identify deficiencies in meeting the IDEP requirements and discuss them with the supervisor.
- Pursue alternatives (observation and continuing education) to fulfill the IDEP requirements where direct work experience in an area is not feasible.
- Schedule and attend meetings with the supervisor and mentor.
- Submit required documentation and fees to NCIDQ on time.

"IDEP enabled me to gain diversified work experience that made me more marketable as an employee and better prepared for the NCIDQ Exam. The experience was rewarding and absolutely worth it!"

LaToya Nelson
NCIDQ Certificate No. 019245

Supervisors

Who is the Supervisor?

The supervisor is typically the participant's direct supervisor at work. As a supervisor, you must be willing to provide day-to-day training and support.

The supervisor must be at least ONE of the following:

- An NCIDQ Certificate holder
- A licensed or registered interior designer
- An architect who offers interior design services.

You can supervise more than one IDEP participant, but keep in mind that each participant will require some individual attention to successfully complete the program.

What are the Supervisor's Responsibilities?

- Collaborate with the participant on a plan for comprehensive on-the-job training.
- Promote professional development outside the scope of the participant's everyday tasks.
- Support the participant's commitment to taking the NCIDQ Exam and becoming a professional.
- **Monthly,** review and approve the participant's IDEP log of hours completed in the competency areas.
- **As needed,** discuss deficiencies in the participant's progress and suggest ways to earn the required hours.

You are not required to communicate with the participant's IDEP mentor, but you may if you wish. A good supervisor-mentor relationship benefits everyone.

Why Become an IDEP Supervisor?

As a supervisor, you will:

- **Attract self-motivated employees—** IDEP participants are driven to work hard, learn new skills and become licensed/registered.
- **Use a proven framework for training—** By helping the participant complete the program, you will also create a more skilled, valuable employee.
- **Save money on NCIDQ Exam fees—** Participants who complete IDEP by the end of 2010 can take Section III of the NCIDQ Exam for free. If you pay for NCIDQ Exam fees, you'll save big!

Mentors

Who is the Mentor?

The mentor is an interior designer who offers the participant support and advice periodically. Mentors should work outside the participant's firm or, if employed in the same firm, should have a non-supervisory relationship with the participant.

The mentor must be at least ONE of the following:

- An NCIDQ Certificate holder
- A licensed or registered interior designer.

You can choose to work with just one IDEP participant or with a group of participants. Group mentoring is often productive and time-saving for both the mentor and participants.

Mentoring is not intended to be a recruitment opportunity and confidentiality is essential.

What are the Mentor's Responsibilities?

As an IDEP mentor, you will supplement the everyday relationship between the supervisor and participant. You will:

- Give the participant a "big picture" perspective on his or her progress.
- Encourage the participant to set short- and long-term career goals.
- Provide advice and support for the challenges the participant faces on the job.

You will be expected to:

- Meet with the participant **three times a year** for the duration of the participant's time in IDEP. You can meet in person, by phone or e-mail.

You are not required to communicate with the participant's supervisor, but you may if you wish. A good mentor-supervisor relationship benefits everyone.

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Why Become an IDEP Mentor?

As a mentor, you will:

- **Learn—**Mentoring is a two-way relationship. You'll bring your wealth of experience to the relationship, and the participant will share his or her knowledge of the latest design trends and technology. Even the most seasoned designer still has something to learn!
- **Feel energized—**As your relationship develops and you see your participant accomplish his or her goals, you'll be proud and excited to be a mentor. You'll remember the "spark" you felt when you first decided to become an interior designer!
- **Make a difference—**Mentoring is a personal, tangible way to give back to the profession.

How Do I Get Started as a Mentor?

If you are asked to mentor an IDEP participant, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I have the time required to devote to this relationship?
- Am I concerned about the participant's career development and growth?
- Do I possess traits typical of good mentors such as a positive attitude, communication skills, patience and reliability?
- Can I respect the confidentiality of our discussions?

Once you decide to become a mentor, ask the participant to prepare for your first meeting by answering the following "clarity" questions:

- What are my professional values?
- Where do I want to be in my career in five years?
- What can I do in the next 12 months that will move me toward my five-year goal?
- What do I want to gain from the mentoring relationship?

Establish a meeting timeline for the next 12 months:

- Work with the participant to select the date, time and location for all required meetings.
- Treat the appointments like an important client meeting or a business event.

At your first meeting, start with these talking points:

- Introduce yourself and share the story of your career.
- Ask the participant to share his or her own story.
- Discuss the participant's goals and objectives.
- Share your hopes and expectations for the mentorship experience.
- Establish how you will stay in contact in between meetings.

In follow-up meetings, start with these topics for discussion:

- Is the participant making progress toward short- and long-term career goals?
- What specific actions has the participant taken since your last meeting?
- What can the participant do between this meeting and the next that will continue to move the participant toward his or her long-term goals?
- Does either the participant or mentor feel that their expectations or hopes for mentorship are not materializing? What can be done to address this?

"Being involved as a mentor gave me an opportunity to see a young design professional grow, gain experience and benefit from some of my own experiences. The time commitment was minimal and the reward was great."

Vincent Carter
NCIDQ Certificate No. 008118