

Study Tips that worked for me

www.AREforum.org – If you aren't already intimately acquainted with this website. Get online and start using it immediately. I could not have gotten through most exams without the input from fellow test-takers. All of your questions will be answered promptly and you can post your practice graphic exam solutions for feedback and look at others' solutions. THE place to go for recommendations on what to study and those who recently passed, what they studied.

(Also a great place to go for sympathy if you failed...but you won't fail. ;-)

Norman Dorf. (RIP) I purchased his practice exams and he gave me feedback on my solutions and would answer e-mail questions.

Archiflash Cards – A great resource for studying each multiple choice section.

Kaplan Study Guides. A great place to start when studying for each multiple choice exam. You can get a general idea of what is covered on each exam.

2 ½ day course offered by UIUC Continuing Ed – Marc Mitaliski

AIA Convention – Seminars on “How to Pass the ARE”. I went to the Graphics, Structures, Pre-Design and MES seminars. It's a great place to get a general idea of what is on the exams, but most of the time it just touches the surface of each exam.

AIA Documents – Grab a project manual from your office and get familiar with the AIA documents in them.

Study Materials:

Kaplan Pre-Design by Spreiregen / De Paz

Architecture Exam Review: Site Planning and Building Design Graphic Divisions 3rd Ed.

by David Kent Ballast, AIA

Heating, Cooling, Lighting: Design Methods for Architects by Norbert Lechner

Architectural License Seminars (ALS) Structural Video Workshop

Kaplan Building Design / Materials & Methods 2nd Ed. by Hornbostel / Raeber

ALS Structural Questions & Answers : II

Kaplan Site Design by Wood

Kaplan Construction Documents & Services 2006 by Kornblut / Sobiech Munson

Structures Flashcards from the AIA Convention (not super helpful so far)

Archiflash cards

AIA Form index (Contracts)

PREPA.R.E. Recommended Formulas to Memorize

The Non-Users Pocket Guide to the Transient Knowledge Necessary for the Structural Divisions of the Architect Registration Exam

Dorf Graphics Division 2 Building Planning

Kaplan Building Planning by Lester Wertheimer (lessons and practice exams)

Dorf Graphics Division 3 Building Technology

Kaplan Building Technology Practice Exams

Kaplan Site Planning (not sure if this is the same one as above? left it at work)

ALS Structures lessons and mock exam

Selecting a structural system chart

<http://www.pixelzone.net/ARE%20History.doc>

Pay attention to timing. I was usually successful with the thrice over method:

1 – Go through the entire exam and only answer the questions you can answer quickly. Mark the questions you aren't sure or that will take some calculations and time to figure out.

2 – Go through the questions you marked.

3 – If you have time – go through the entire exam again. Check every question and answer. You may have missed key words that change the whole question like “what is NOT...”

For the graphic exams, start each exam by making a check list of what you need to solve. Double check that you have written down EVERYTHING you are required to provide in your solution. Then, check what you complete. If you write it on your scratch paper, you eliminate time wasted going back and forth from the exam instructions. It takes five minutes tops at the beginning, but saves so much time and stress.

I would schedule my exams on a Saturday. I have half day work Fridays and can spend a good amount of time reviewing my notes. I took most of my exams at the Clark St. location in Chicago. I recommend it as far as atmosphere and helpful staff.

I would, on average, take one exam a month. I would recommend this schedule. It allowed for enough time to take one week to decompress and then, not too much time that I would not be able to retain the material. Graphic exams don't require tons of study time, but make sure you take the practice exams and get use to the program. Practice the graphic exams to the point where you can do them in your sleep. It will make the actual exam so much more stress free. Do set a realistic goal for yourself on when you want to be done with the exams. Don't be too discouraged if you don't pass all of your exams by your deadline.

Some people recommend starting with some easy exams to “get your feet wet”. I did not use this method. I started with the “harder” exams that required more review and study time (aka structures) or exams I knew had a high failure rate. That way, if I needed to retake the exams, I could take other exams during the 6 month required waiting period. Also, you are not finished with 8 exams and have six months (plus result waiting time) to retake an exam.

I found my exams to be increasingly LEED focused. If you are LEED certified, you most likely are ahead of the game.

Before you start an exam, write down some of what you studied (aka formulas or tips to remember). Take that time before you hit the start button and are on the clock. The stress of taking the exam may make things you know fly out of your head. If they are written down on your scratch paper, you have it for reference.

During the exam – Look at the reference materials. They will give you formulas that will most likely come in handy for a question or two.

Make sure you are familiar with your calculator if you bring one.

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