

I approached the ARE with the attitude that I wanted to finish AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE without killing myself in the process.

My logic in determining the order in which I took the exams was to put the driest exams- the ones that I would not want to study for if I left them for the end- first. I consider CDs and Services to be the driest, the most straightforward, and the shortest, so I took that before any of the others. Pre-Design is best scheduled after the other non-structures multiple choice exams since some of the also shows up on Pre-Design; it covers a wide range of subjects, but I was able to do a lot of the reading on public transportation, during the weeks I was practicing for the Graphic Exams. I took the Structures Exams last (first General Structures and then Lateral Forces), since the information to be studied for them does not seem to overlap with any other exams. I also am comfortable with the subject and was not overly worried that I would fail them (this is the only concern that would make me recommend taking the Structures Exams first- so that if you do not pass one of them the first time, by the time you are finished taking your other exams, you can retake them immediately).

My Target Schedule:

LEED exam	Two weeks studying
CDs and Services	Four weeks studying
Materials and Methods	Four weeks studying
Mechanical and Electrical Systems	Four weeks studying

*** Take a week off ***

Building Technology	Two weeks practicing
Building Planning	Two weeks practicing
Site Planning	Two weeks practicing
Pre-Design	Six weeks studying

*** Take a week off ***

General Structures	Six weeks studying
Lateral Forces	Two weeks studying

I overlaid this generic schedule with my personal calendar- with special events and holidays already marked- I tried to give myself some breathing room around these, but not so much that I got off track. I started with the date that I wanted to take the first exam, and counted forward with the amount of time it would take to study for the next- when I came upon an event I wanted to avoid, I'd either move the next exam to just before it, or give myself at least two weeks of study time after it. I set a date by which I definitely wanted to have them all complete; for me, this was Gensler's Bonus Day- June 15th – for you it can be anything: opening day at Wrigley, someone's graduation date, an anniversary... just make sure to leave yourself some breathing room so it is an attainable goal!

I scheduled all of my exams on Tuesday mornings- this gave me the weekend to study hard, then Monday to rest (generally, I would review a little bit and then get a good night's sleep; only once was I still cramming).

Multiple Choice Exams: Generally, these exams test your understanding of the concepts. Sometimes memorizing formulae can help, but the exams will many times provide key formulae. The important thing is to be able to read the question carefully, decide what they are REALLY asking and what you think the answer is, and THEN read the multiple choice answers, finding the best fit with the answer you had already decided on. If you DO feel the need to memorize anything for the exam, I recommend that once you get to your computer with your two pencils and your stack of 6 sheets of paper, tear all of the sheets apart (they come stapled together), so you aren't worried about making noise during the timed period, then write down EVERYTHING you memorized. That'll free your mind up to THINK, (and while the time is ticking, you can refer back to your notes to find the information you are looking for).

How I studied: I found taking notes on index cards extremely helpful. I put the topic on one side and the useful information on the other- then toward the end of my studying time, I had my own set of flashcards that I could look at, and if I knew a topic, I could put it away and just focus on the ones I did not yet know. On the weekends, I would use the ALS practice exam (on the computer). I also went through the ArchiFlash cards a day or two before each exam- these were more or less helpful depending on the exam; on some, they were more helpful than the ALS guide!

I studied for a minimum of 1-2 hours every weekday (including time on the train), and about 4 hours a day on the weekend- more on the weekend before the exam. This wasn't something I rigidly scheduled, it was taking advantage of every opportunity to study.

Graphic Exams: These are typically testing you on ONE skill each- don't over-think, go for the simplest answer and whatever you do, don't go for high-design! This is not a real world situation, no one is counting off if your solution is ugly. Answer the question as laid out in the program avoiding violations against the exam's code (no other code counts) and move on.

The main studying I did for the Graphic Exams was practice with NCARB's practice program. The most important thing is to get familiar with the program, so you aren't learning it during the testing time- so practice, practice, practice! Reading Norman Dorf's book (Solutions) is EXTREMELY helpful- I would recommend to anyone who is planning on taking any of the Graphic Exams to read that section of his book at least once- he has a good handle on what the computer grader is looking for and grading off on, as well as suggestions for time-saving strategies. You can try these strategies and decide if they are right for you (we all work differently), but the information he gives is invaluable. I didn't find the ALS guides on these at all helpful- in fact, there were places where their solutions would have gotten marked off by Norman Dorf!

Recommendations for the day of the exam: Eat a nutritious breakfast before your exam- high protein holds you well. Bring nutritious snacks- nuts and granola are good- don't eat anything with a lot of sugar, you may get a good sugar high, but you might be let down in the middle of the testing time. Get to the testing location early- they recommend half an hour before your scheduled time. If you are inclined to be late (and stressed), be even earlier than this! Breathe deeply and try to relax- trying to cram a little more information into your already fried brain at this point will probably just do more harm than good). After the exam, just unwind and don't think about the next test. I had a bunch of friends that would get together on Tuesday nights; I didn't have to worry about the next exam that evening, at least!

*** Remember: It's a MARATHON, not a SPRINT! ***

MY ARCHITECTURAL REGISTRATION EXAM SCHEDULE

Su M T W Th F Sa

Su M T W Th F Sa

2003

		Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
October					1	2	3	4
		5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		12	13	14	15	16	17	18
November		19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		26	27	28	29	30	31	1
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
December		9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		16	17	18	19	20	21	22
		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
January		30	1	2	3	4	5	6
		7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		14	15	16	17	18	19	20
February		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
		28	29	30	31	1	2	3
		4	5	6	7	8	9	10
March		11	12	13	14	15	16	17
		18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		25	26	27	28	29	30	1
April		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		16	17	18	19	20	21	22
May		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
		30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
June		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		27	28	29	30			

		Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
March		15	16	17	18	19	20	21
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		29	1	2	3	4	5	6
April		7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		21	22	23	24	25	26	27
May		28	29	30	31	1	2	3
		4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		11	12	13	14	15	16	17
June		18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		25	26	27	28	29	30	1
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
July		9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		16	17	18	19	20	21	22
		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
August		30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
September		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		27	28	29	30			

2004

Handwritten Annotations:

- October 6:** LEED
- November 28:** CDS
- December 1:** MAT METH
- December 25-29:** BLACKOUT
- January 13:** MIE
- February 3:** G: BLDG BIDS
- February 10:** G: BLDG PLAN

Handwritten Annotations:

- March 24:** G: SITE PLAN
- March 9:** PRE-DESIGN
- April 20:** GEN STRUC
- May 4:** LAT FORC
- June 15:** PERSONAL GOAL
- Vertical Labels:** RESCHEDULE (written vertically on the right side of the calendar)
- Arrows:** A large arrow points from the 'PERSONAL GOAL' box back to the 'RESCHEDULE' label.

ARCHITECTURAL REGISTRATION EXAM SCHEDULE

Su M T W Th F Sa

Su M T W Th F Sa

2005

May	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
June	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
July	26	27	28	29	30	1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
August	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
September	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
October	28	29	30	31	1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	1
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30	31	1	2	3	4	5

2006

November	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
December	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
January	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
February	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
March	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
April	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29