

**Member Board ARE Online Proctoring Update: 9/24/2020**

Earlier this week, NCARB shared a blog post that answered several frequently asked questions from candidates about our announcement related to online proctoring. It has generated a lot of discussion around the answer to one FAQ in particular: the decision to remove access to scratch paper for those taking the ARE in physical test centers beginning November 16.

**Will I have access to scratch paper during my online-proctored exam?**

Once the option for online proctoring launches on November 16, candidates testing online and in person will no longer have access to physical, paper-and-pencil scratch paper. Candidates will be able to use an online [whiteboard] option instead; more details regarding this tool will be available in October.

To help you answer candidate concerns, we have compiled some key takeaways and more in-depth information around this decision.

**1. Scratch paper will be replaced with a digital whiteboard.**

All the tools candidates need to complete the ARE will be provided, and we will ensure the whiteboard will be made available prior to launch so candidates can get comfortable with it before using it in a test center or online. Candidates will be able to test and get familiar with the new whiteboard tool when the new demonstration exam launches in mid-October.

**2. Consistency and fairness for candidates whether they are testing online or in-person.**

NCARB needs to ensure candidates have the same test experience whether they are online or onsite. NCARB does not want to introduce variance into the different testing modalities when the online proctoring option launches. One of the key factors in maintaining exam defensibility is to treat all candidates the same.

**3. Security requirements for the online proctored exam.**

The replacement of scratch paper follows best practices in testing by ensuring there is a “clean desk” for exam security purposes. This is also part of the transition to online proctoring, because it is more difficult to monitor the use and disposal of loose paper when candidates are testing remotely as opposed to in a test center.

**4. NCARB did not make this decision lightly.**

While the current pandemic has moved up NCARB’s timeline to release the online proctored version of the exam, this has been something our Board of Directors and Examination Committee has been considering and evaluating for years. As the ARE is a standardized test all NCARB’s Member Boards accept as part of evaluating competency to earn a license, making sure the exam is delivered in a secure and consistent manner is our top priority. To meet those goals, items like scratch paper were identified and discussed early in the process of understanding what it would take to allow the ARE to be delivered through online proctoring.

**5. There are more policy and exam changes to be announced.**

NCARB's intention is to provide Member Boards with advance notice of major changes we announce over the next two months. The Board of Directors is finalizing many of them at their September Board meeting, and boards will receive notice of upcoming changes to the number of questions per division, test times of each division, and other policies shifts prior to their release to candidates.