

Start Your Certification Journey

5 Tips to Navigate the Process

ACHA Helpful Hints



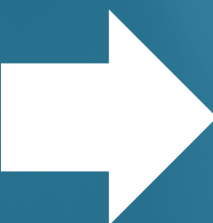
Advancing Health Environments Through Design

Give yourself time

Set aside 2 months to collect and organize the information needed for the initial application so you don't feel overwhelmed. Use this time also to help set up your strategy for studying and portfolio creation once your application is accepted.

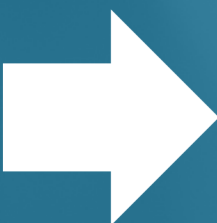
Consider the following:

- Who will be your references?
- What projects should you use for your portfolio?
- Identify key areas to focus on for studying for the exam.



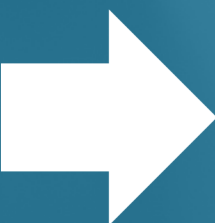
Know your references

- It can be difficult to select your references if you've only worked in a few places, but make sure they know you well enough to speak to your specific contributions, skill sets, and knowledge related to ACHA certification criteria.
- Architect References:
 - They do not need to be healthcare-specific.
 - If you have enough client references and you have worked for clients who are also licensed architects, they can serve as your Architect Reference.
 - Past and retired architects from your firm who know you and are still licensed can also serve as architect references.



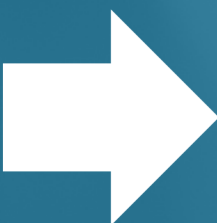
Streamline your portfolio

- Don't reinvent the wheel! The most important part of the portfolio is your work experience, not your graphic skills in marketing. See if your marketing department has a template you can start with and tailor it to meet the requirements of ACHA so you don't have to start from scratch.
- Remember that the portfolio is about your candidacy for ACHA, and your text should not be "marketing verbiage." It needs to be specific to your contribution to the success of your featured healthcare projects.
- Quality, not Quantity: There's no need to max out the number of project examples in your portfolio. Include the highest quality projects that showcase your work as a healthcare architect.



Get ahead of the exam

- Start studying early and identify areas you need to familiarize yourself with.
- Project experience = test experience. The best way to learn is by doing.
- Use various references, such as VA Design Standards, FGI, etc., as a starting point for developing study questions.
- Attend one of the ACHA Exam Preparation Seminars if possible.
- Prepare for exam day success – Know the test site rules. Arrange for travel and lodging if required.



Where to go with questions? 5

- ACHA: We're happy to help!
- Your Firm: See if anyone else in your firm is ACHA Certified and can help you through the process. It also doesn't hurt to ask whether your firm will financially support your pursuit of Certification through fee reimbursement.
- Local AIA-AAH: Reach out to your network and people in related organizations. There are tons of healthcare architects willing to help you on your journey.

