

POLICY ON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In 1997, the component associations of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) agreed to adopt a standardized method for documenting the accumulation of specific skills and knowledge relevant to the profession of landscape architecture. Membership eligibility and requirements are determined by each individual CSLA component association.

The *Policy on Internship Program* was endorsed by the BCSLA at its Annual General Meeting on February 28, 1998. Revisions to the policy were approved on September 28, 2010, again on March 26, 2019, and most recently on June 24, 2025 to address stakeholder concerns and align with evolving legislation, bylaws and policies. Further revisions may be necessary as the program is refined.

This process is designed to support qualified BCSLA Interns in fulfilling their requirements for full membership in the Society. It applies to all qualified BCSLA Interns regardless of whether they complete their formal education, professional experience, or examination requirements in British Columbia, another jurisdiction within Canada, or internationally. BCSLA Interns are not obliged to reside or work in Canada while completing their requirements for full membership.

This document explains definitions, mandatory experience requirements, reporting procedures, experience records and summaries, and minimum experience criteria. Monthly Experience Record and Three-Month Experience Summary forms are available on the BCSLA website at www.bcsla.org.

DEFINITIONS

In accordance with the bylaws of the Society, the following definitions apply in this policy:

1. **“BCSLA Intern”** means an Associate who has been accepted by the Board into the admission program for Membership in the Society, and on such acceptance the applicant is entitled to use the designation “BCSLA Intern”;
2. **“Employer”** means an individual or firm for whom the BCSLA Intern is employed undertaking work related to landscape architecture;
3. **“Qualified Mentor”** means a Registered Landscape Architect, Landscape Architect, or other allied professional with experience, qualifications and knowledge in the area they are mentoring, including individuals eligible for Reciprocity membership who are committed to regularly reviewing a BCSLA Intern’s work experience, providing instruction on technical skills, and offering professional support, without the obligation to be employed at the same organization, or reside or work in Canada. For clarity, an allied professional must be a regulated practitioner in a land- or natural resource-based profession within their jurisdiction, such as an architect, biologist, engineer, or forester. Where regulation of allied professions varies by jurisdiction, applicants may be asked to provide supporting documentation verifying the Mentor’s regulated status, scope of professional practice, and relevance to the field of landscape architecture. The Credentials Committee reserves the right to assess the appropriateness of the Mentor on a case-by-case basis.

MANDATORY EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Work experience is typically obtained in an office under the direct supervision of a Qualified Mentor. BCSLA Interns must acquire sufficient work experience that meets the generally accepted standards of practical skill and competence necessary for professional practice in landscape architecture. It is the responsibility of the BCSLA Intern to seek employment that provides the required scope of experience.

If an intern is unable to secure employment under the direct supervision of a Qualified Mentor, they must obtain endorsement signatures from both their employer and an external Qualified Mentor on the Monthly Experience Record and Three-Month Experience Summary forms.

Intern Experience Category Requirements

BCSLA Interns are required to document a minimum of 3,600 hours (equivalent to 2 years) of work experience, approved by their Qualified Mentor. This must be completed within five years from the date the BCSLA Intern was approved for Associate membership.

3,100 of those hours are covered by the minimum requirements across six core areas: Design Development, Detail Design, Contract Documents, Contract Administration, Office Practice, and Open Space Planning.

The remaining 500 hours can be completed across any of the six core areas mentioned above and/or two additional areas: Regulatory Review and Other.

1. Design Development (minimum 500 hours)

This shall include Conceptual Design Alternatives, Schematic Design (e.g., Drainage), Physical & Contextual Site Analysis, Site Inventory / Survey / Base Info, Legislative (Policy, Guidelines), Code & Bylaw Review, and Programming (e.g., CPTED).

2. Detail Design (minimum 225 hours)

This shall include Preliminary Site Plans, Preliminary Quantities & Cost Estimates, Presentation Drawings & Communications (tools incl. Rendering / Photography / Models), and Client / Public Presentations.

3. Contract Documents (minimum 1,275 hours)

This shall include the assembling and preparation of Grading / Drainage Plans, Planting Plans, Plant Lists, Planting Details, Demolition Plan, Existing Condition Plan, Tree Protection Plan, General Notes, Layout Plan, Materials Plan, Sections, Elevations, and Profiles, Phasing Plans, Irrigation Plan, Lighting Plan Layout, Signage and Wayfinding Plan, Technical Specification Writing, Cost Estimating / Control, Bid Form / Schedule – Project Manual / Front End – Tender Administration & Contract Award.

4. Contract Administration (minimum 725 hours)

This shall include Site Meetings (Pre, During & After Construction), Site Inspections / Reports, Site Instructions / Review and Response to RFIs, Contemplated Change Orders, Change Orders, Change Directives, Review Submittals, Deficiency Reports, Payment / Completion Certificates, Landscape Maintenance Review.

5. Office Practice (minimum 75 hours)

This shall include participation in and preparation of Proposals / Fee Calculating, Firm Brochure, Website & Proposal Graphics, Correspondence, Meetings, Project Management Coordination, Budgeting / Costing, and Office Management.

6. Open Space Planning (minimum 300 hours)

This shall include participation in Site Inventory, Analysis / Synthesis / Opportunities and Constraints, Land Use Plan, Site Master Plan, Historic / Cultural Restoration and Preservation Plan, Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan, View Corridor Plan, Multi-modal Transportation Plan, Public Meetings and Workshops, Design Guidelines, Feasibility Study, Process Development, Documentary Research, Report Writing / Editing.

7. Regulatory Review (no minimum hours required)

This may include Development Permit Review and Correspondence, Building Permit Review and Correspondence, and Landscape Installation Review.

8. Other (no minimum hours required)

This may include Teaching, Research, Publishing, Writing, Volunteering, or other activities approved by the Credentials Committee.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The internship period must provide the BCSLA Intern with sufficient exposure to various aspects of landscape architecture practice to ensure professional competence.

Mentors are encouraged to provide ample opportunities for BCSLA Interns to gain diverse work experience. This may include allowing them to accompany a Registered Landscape Architect as an observer until they are prepared to carry out tasks independently. Additionally, Interns may be encouraged to draft 'parallel' documents alongside those prepared by their supervisor and submit them to the Employer and Qualified Mentor for review.

Qualified Mentor Guidelines

1. Act as the Intern member's professional advisor by conducting regular meetings with the Intern to review experience and performance and offer constructive criticism. Contact with the Intern's employer is also encouraged (if mentor and employer are not one and the same).
2. Advise the Intern with respect to their professional conduct and philosophy.
3. Counsel the Intern with respect to a proper approach to technical problems.
4. Review and assess the Intern's work experience record and advise of any deficiencies, recommending changes of focus if necessary.
5. Certify all aspects of the Intern pre-registration experience under their review.

Experience Record & Experience Summary

The Monthly Work Experience Record documents the Intern's experience gained during the pre-registration period. It tracks the time spent within the eight areas of mandatory experience on a weekly occurrence. The record should be used as the basis for discussions between the Intern and Qualified Mentor during their regular meetings.

The Three-Month Experience Summary enables the Intern, Qualified Mentor, Employer, and Society to monitor progress and provide support as needed.

Instructions for the completion and submission of the Monthly Work Experience Record and Three-Month Experience Summaries are as follows:

- Interns are required to make weekly entries on the Monthly Experience Record forms using the online system detailing the hours spent on each form.
- Although it is not required to send Monthly Work Experience Record forms to the BCSLA, Interns are advised to keep a hard copy of their Records with their Qualified Mentor's stamp and signature, as they may be required to provide their Records to the BCSLA upon request. The Intern's Employer must initial any alterations to the form after it is signed.
- Some work experience tasks can be completed as "Observer" where there is reluctance on the part of the Employer to fully delegate certain work to inexperienced Interns.
- The online system will automatically generate the Three-Month Experience Summaries. The Intern and Qualified Mentor should both sign off on the applicable reports and summaries.
- For each project completed, Interns must use a separate sheet of paper to indicate the name of the project, date completed, and experience obtained, along with the stamp and signature of their Qualified Mentor.
- It is advised that Interns keep a copy for their own records, as the BCSLA assumes no responsibility for lost Records or Summary sheets.

Backdating Experience

An individual applying as a BCSLA Intern who has earned a bachelor's or master's degree in landscape architecture accredited by the CSLA's Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council or by the American Society of Landscape Architects' Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board may request a reduction in Mandatory Experience for the time worked after completing their degree and before becoming a BCSLA Intern.

They must provide the original BCSLA Three-Month Experience Summary and have their Qualified Mentor sign and seal the form. The Qualified Mentor must also provide a letter of recommendation.

The BCSLA Intern may request up to a one-month reduction for every two months worked, up to a maximum reduction of 12 months (or 1,800 hours).