SKILL LEVEL DEFINITIONS
On the Architecture and Interior Design Student Learning Contracts, a student’s Skill Level is determined by the Examiner’s identifying at which level a student is engaging in a task or topic area. This reflects the fact that design professionals of all experience levels engage in the same types of activities, such as programming, or drawing construction documents – but depending on their level of experience, they engage in these activities in different ways. The following descriptions give students a sense of what the different Skill Levels, as well as “beginner,” “intermediate,” and “advanced” mean.

NOTE: Architecture students are eligible to sign up and participate in IDP as soon as they enroll in an NAAB approved Architecture program. Interior Design students are eligible to sign up and participate in NCIDQ’s IDEP after eight (8) semesters.

BEGINNER/SKILL LEVEL 1-2
Students who are performing tasks, working, and learning at a “beginner” level are typically:
- At an “intern” or “team member” position
- Not directly managing other team members
- Reporting directly to a team leader or senior intern
- Not engaged directly in design, but in peripheral activities like marketing, office work, answering phones, etc
- Working “day-to-day,” with a set of tasks to complete each day, towards the completion of the overall project
- In a “mentee” relationship with their peers, learning from their more experienced peers
- Participating in meetings as an observer
- Beginning to engage in design culture, professional organizations, exhibitions, and student life at the BAC
- Beginning to investigate professional licensure options for their design field
- Engaged in thinking tasks like listing, summarizing, clarifying, remembering, and responding
- Understanding the importance of professionalism as it pertains to timeliness, dress, communication and responsiveness, and general comportment.

INTERMEDIATE – LOWER /SKILL LEVEL 3-4
Students who are performing tasks, working, and learning at an “intermediate” level are typically:
- At an intern position
- Reporting directly to a team leader or senior intern, and beginning to work directly with associates or project architects
- Directly engaged in design, and beginning to become familiar with several different project phases
- Working on tasks that span more than just “day to day,” and are beginning to strategically plan their own task execution toward the completion of the overall project
- Participating in meetings as an active support participant; often tasked with taking and distributing minutes
- Actively engaged in design culture, professional organizations, exhibitions, and student life at the BAC
- Enrolled in the appropriate professional licensing organization and actively pursuing licensure, where possible [IDP]
- Engaged in thinking tasks like carrying out and checking work [such as redlines], generating new content or design ideas, identifying, integrating, and differentiating. In summary, having a baseline knowledge that allows student to begin making design and process decisions.
- Deepening their understanding of professionalism to include improving written and verbal communication, beginning to engage with clients, vendors, and other project team members outside of the firm, and improving work/school time management skills
INTERMEDIATE – UPPER / SKILL LEVEL 5-6
Students who are performing tasks, working, and learning at an “intermediate” level are typically:
- At an intern position, but beginning to take more active leadership within teams
- Beginning to guide other more entry level interns
- Reporting directly to a team leader or senior intern, and beginning to work directly with associates or project architects
- Beginning to mentor less experienced peers, though still actively being mentored by more senior designers

ADVANCED – LOWER / SKILL LEVEL 7-8
Students who are performing tasks, working, and learning at an “advanced” level are typically:
- At a senior intern or team leader position
- Actively managing team members
- Reporting directly to an associate, project architect, or principal
- Directly engaged in design, and beginning to become even more familiar with several different project phases; often beginning to specialize in one design phase [CDs, CA, etc] but has had significant exposure to all phases
- Working on tasks that span more than just “day to day,” and are actively, strategically planning their own task execution toward the completion of the overall project in concert with senior project managers/associates
- Actively mentoring less experienced peers, though still actively being mentored by more senior designers/principals
- Participating in meetings as an active participant or even leader; often tasked with taking and distributing minutes and developing agendas
- Actively engaged in design culture, professional organizations, exhibitions, and student life at the BAC
- Enrolled in, and making significant progress the appropriate professional licensing organization and actively pursuing licensure, where possible [IDP]
- Engaged in thinking tasks like generating new designs and drawings, actively reflecting on project progress and execution, confronting cultural/intellectual/design biases, and making mature design decisions while weighing all factors.
- Deepening their understanding of professionalism to include mature written and verbal communication, actively functioning as a firm representative with clients, vendors, and other project team members outside of the firm, and mature work/school time management skills

ADVANCED – UPPER / SKILL LEVEL 9-11
Students who are performing tasks, working, and learning at this “advanced” level are typically:
- Enrolled in, and has their professional licensing almost completed [IDP]
- Professionally presents research/work at an organized seminar, conference or workshop
- Marketing for their employer and bringing in new projects
- Project managing multiple complex projects
- Assisting with the search and hiring of full-time and part-time employees for their employer