

Quality Assurance vs Quality Control: The Complete Process



*These notes supplement (not replace) studying NCARB's test objectives.
See full blog post at YoungArchitect.com/Quality*

Quality Assurance (QA)

Focus: Prevention & systems

Timing: Before problems occur

Purpose: Establishes procedures, standards, & protocols

Examples: Review protocols, checklists, standards, design procedures

Memory Aid: "A" comes before "C" in the alphabet - QA (prevention) happens before QC (correction)

Helpful Analogies

Cooking

QA: Following recipe, measuring ingredients

QC: Tasting food & adjusting seasoning

Road Trip

QA: Mapping route, checking car condition

QC: Monitoring gas level, adjusting 4 detours

QA/QC During Design Phase

Quality Assurance

- Establish design standards & procedures before design work starts
- Office standards & BIM management plans
- Coordination with consultants through meetings & reviews
- Early code analysis & accessibility compliance checks
- Monitor consistency between documents & owner requirements

Quality Control (QC)

Focus: Detection & correction

Timing: Work is in progress or complete

Purpose: Identifies when something doesn't meet requirements

Examples: Testing, inspections, verification activities

Health

QA: Exercise, healthy eating, checkups

QC: Monitoring symptoms, getting tests

Gardening

QA: Preparing soil, selecting plants

QC: Checking for pests, pruning as needed

Quality Control

- Structured reviews at each phase SD, DD, CD
- Peer reviews, principal reviews, or fresh-eye reviews
- Technical accuracy checks (dimensions, cross-references)
- Value engineering & cost estimates
- Milestone approvals & sign-off

QA/QC Tools During Design: Design checklists by phase, Decision tracking logs, Drawing & document templates, Quality management software BIM coordination & clash detection, Document management systems, Review comment tracking

QA/QC During Construction Documentation

Quality Assurance

- Document standards & protocols (drawing standards, sheet organization)

- Technical specifications coordination
- Regular coordination between disciplines
- Drawing production sequencing

Please refrain from sharing this document online. Instead, help spread the word about the FREE Architect Exam Podcast by directing friends to YoungArchitect.com/AREpodcast Thanks for supporting us!

Quality Control

- Verify technical accuracy (dimensions, coordination)
- Content verification (complete scope

coverage, design intent)

- Interdisciplinary coordination checks
- Final quality control before issuance (full set review, back-checking)

QA/QC in Construction Administration



**YOUNG
ARCHITECT**

Quality Assurance

- Pre-construction meetings to review quality expectations
- Submittal review procedures
- RFI management systems
- Site visit protocols & field observation procedures
- Non-conformance documentation

Quality Control

- Testing & inspection planning
- Material verification (match approved submittals)
- Installation verification (especially first installations)
- Ongoing conformance checks and closeout quality verification (punch lists, testing)

Roles & Responsibilities

Architect/Engineer

- Establishes quality standards in contract documents
- Implements design QA/QC
- Reviews submittals for conformance
- Conducts field observations
- Authority to reject non-conforming work
- Limitations: Doesn't dictate means & methods, not on site continuously

Owner

- Establishes project quality goals & requirements
- Defines quality expectations in program
- Engages special inspectors & testing agencies
- Makes decisions on non-conforming work
- Accepts completed work
- May conduct post-occupancy evaluation

Contractor

- Construction means & methods
- Supervision & coordination of work
- Subcontractor quality management
- Product handling & storage
- Pre-installation meetings
- Verifying installation quality
- Correcting non-conforming work & Punch list item

Exam Tips:

Know the difference between QA & QC (prevention vs. detection)

- Understand roles & responsibilities of each party
- Recognize how QA/QC applies throughout the project lifecycle
- Understand importance of documentation & communication

-Common exam scenarios:

- Who's responsible for specific QA/QC tasks
- When certain processes should occur
- Appropriate responses to quality issues

ARE Exam References:

Practice Management Objective 4.2, Project Management Section 5, Present across all ARE exams

Please refrain from sharing this document online. Instead, help spread the word about the FREE Architect Exam Podcast by directing friends to YoungArchitect.com/AREpodcast Thanks for supporting us!