

California Real Estate Appraiser Licensing Requirements

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Obtaining a Real Estate Appraiser License in California

California requires all real estate appraisers to be licensed to perform valuations in federally related transactions, as mandated by federal law (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). The California Bureau of Real Estate Appraisers (BREA) administers the licensing program under state statute and the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). Applicants must complete specific education, supervised experience, and pass examinations before the Bureau will issue an appraisal license or certification.

License Levels and Scope

California has four levels of appraiser licensure, each with its own education, experience, and scope requirements (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov):

- **Trainee Appraiser (AT)** – Entry-level license. Requires **150 hours** of qualifying education (including a 15-hour USPAP course) and completion of mandatory state courses (supervisory/trainee roles, California appraisal laws, and cultural competency) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). No prior experience is required; however, trainees must work under the direct supervision of a qualified appraiser and may only appraise properties that their supervisor can handle (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).
- **Licensed Residential Appraiser (AL)** – First independent level. Requires **150 hours** of education (including USPAP, plus California laws and competency courses) and **1,000 hours** of supervised experience completed over at least 6 months (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). Licensed Residential appraisers may appraise non-complex 1- to 4-unit properties up to \$1 million and certain non-residential properties up to \$250,000 (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).

- **Certified Residential Appraiser (AR)** – Mid level. Requires **200 hours** of education (including USPAP and certain college-level coursework or a degree; see below) and **1,500 hours** of experience over at least 12 months (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). Certified Residential appraisers may appraise any 1-4 family property regardless of value or complexity, and non-residential properties up to \$250,000 (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).
- **Certified General Appraiser (AG)** – Highest level. Requires **300 hours** of education (including USPAP and a bachelor's degree or higher) and **3,000 hours** of experience over at least 18 months (with at least 1,500 hours in non-residential appraisal) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). Certified General appraisers may appraise all types of real property, without regard to value or complexity (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).

Education Requirements

Applicants must complete BREA-approved appraisal courses totaling the required hours for their license level (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). The core curriculum covers appraisal theory, procedures, and valuation methods. For example, the **150-hour** curriculum for a Trainee/Residential license includes courses such as:

- *Basic Appraisal Principles* – 30 hours (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)
- *Basic Appraisal Procedures* – 30 hours (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)
- *15-Hour National USPAP* – 15 hours (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)
- *Residential Market Analysis & Highest and Best Use* – 15 hours (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)
- *Residential Site Valuation & Cost Approach* – 15 hours (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)
- *Residential Sales Comparison & Income Approach* – 30 hours (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)
- *Residential Report Writing & Case Studies* – 15 hours (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)

These course modules (and their subtopics) are detailed in BREA's Basic Education requirements (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). Higher license levels require additional coursework. For a **Certified Residential (AR)** license, the applicant must complete the 200-hour core modules *plus* meet one of the college-level criteria (for example, a bachelor's degree or specific college courses) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). For a **Certified General (AG)** license, the 300 hours are in advanced appraisal subjects (plus Statistics/Finance and Income Approach modules) and a college degree is required (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).

In addition to these core courses, California mandates certain state-specific classes. All applicants must take a **4-hour California and federal appraisal laws** course and a **2-hour Cultural Competency (bias awareness)** course (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). Appraiser trainee applicants must also complete a **4-hour Supervisory/Trainee Appraisers** course (covering responsibilities of trainee and supervisor) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). (This course is required before receiving a trainee license (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).) Note: BREA only accepts coursework completed within five years of application.

Experience Requirements

Licensure also depends on documented appraisal experience under supervision. New Trainees accumulate clocked experience by working on appraisals under a qualified supervisor, though no experience is needed to obtain the initial Trainee license. To upgrade to higher levels, the following minimum experience is required (per BREA regulations):

- **Licensed Residential (AL):** 1,000 hours of experience in no fewer than 6 months (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).
- **Certified Residential (AR):** 1,500 hours of experience in no fewer than 12 months (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).
- **Certified General (AG):** 3,000 hours of experience (including at least 1,500 hours non-residential) in no fewer than 18 months (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).

Experience must be logged on standardized appraisal reports signed by the supervising appraiser. BREA allows posting of hours only after the trainee has taken the supervisory-course and formally begun their training under an eligible supervisor.

BREA recognizes two pathways for gaining experience credit:

- The **traditional supervisor/trainee model**, where a licensed (Certified) appraiser supervises the trainee on real appraisal assignments. The supervising appraiser must be state-licensed at the certified level for at least 3 years and remain in good

standing (no relevant disciplinary actions in the past 3 years) (Source: [brea.ca.gov](https://www.brea.ca.gov)). Both trainees and supervisors (with affiliations started after 2014) must complete an approved Supervisor/Trainee course before any hours can count (Source: [brea.ca.gov](https://www.brea.ca.gov)). This model has been standard practice for decades.

- The **PAREA (Practical Applications of Real Estate Appraisal) program**, an AQB-approved alternative launched in 2021. PAREA is a technology-based practicum that provides simulated appraisal assignments and case studies. A participant who completes PAREA is eligible to receive 100% credit for the experience required for Licensed Residential or Certified Residential credentials (Source: www.appraisalfoundation.org). (Partial credit toward the Certified General experience is also available.) Those who choose PAREA must finish their education first and then enroll in a PAREA provider. Both options (traditional or PAREA) lead to the same licensing exam eligibility.

Examination and State Application

Once education and experience requirements are met for a given license level, the candidate applies to BREA for licensure. The Bureau reviews the application and, if prerequisites are satisfied, issues an **exam eligibility letter** (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). This allows the candidate to register with the state's testing vendor (Prometric/PSI) and schedule the licensing exam. In California, appraiser candidates must pass a **national exam** (Uniform Licensing & Certification Exam) and a **California state-specific exam** covering state laws and regulations (Source: www.indeed.com). The exams are administered by a third-party testing service: the candidate pays the exam fee directly to the provider, brings the eligibility letter to the testing center, and typically receives scores immediately after testing.

Candidates have up to five attempts to pass the required exam(s) within one year of eligibility (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). Upon passing all exam portions, the testing vendor provides an official score report. The applicant must then submit this score report (or the original Notice of Results) along with an **Application for Issuance of License** (BREA form REA 3008), proof of education completions (transcripts or certificates), the experience log signed by the supervisor, fingerprint clearance (for DOJ/FBI background check (Source: www.brea.ca.gov), and any applicable fees to BREA. Once BREA verifies everything, they will issue the appraiser license or certificate.

Continuing Education and Renewal

California appraiser licenses are valid for **two years** and then must be renewed (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). Renewal requires completing **continuing education (CE)** within a four-year cycle. A total of **56 hours** of bureau-approved CE is required every four years (Source: www.brea.ca.gov). This includes mandatory courses: a 7-hour USPAP Update every two years and a 4-hour California federal/state laws course (or equivalent) every four years (Source: www.brea.ca.gov), as well as the biennial 2-hour Elimination of Bias and 1-hour Cultural Competency courses. Appraisers must submit transcripts or certificates for all CE courses when renewing. Failure to renew or complete CE will result in license expiration. Licensees should track renewal deadlines and approved course lists on the BREA website.

In summary, the path to becoming a licensed appraiser in California involves: (1) completing the required appraisal education, (2) passing exams, (3) accruing the necessary supervised experience (or completing PAREA), and (4) applying to the Bureau with all documentation. By meeting these requirements and maintaining continuing education, an appraiser can legally practice and serve as a trusted valuation professional in California (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov).

Sources: California Bureau of Real Estate Appraisers Licensing Handbook and official BRE guidelines (Source: www.brea.ca.gov)
 (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source: www.brea.ca.gov) (Source:
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Tags: real estate appraisal, california appraiser license, brea, uspap, appraiser education, appraiser experience, pareia, certified appraiser

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