



Thinking About a Career in Real Estate Appraisal?

Helpful tips to start you on your way!

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Tell me about the Real Estate Appraisal Profession

“So, what are you going to do when you graduate?” How often have you heard that question? There are endless paths to pursue, yet which one is right for you? We’re here to tell you about a profession you may never have heard of, but one that is worth considering. It offers flexible hours and uses cutting-edge technology. You can work independently or for a large company. The earning potential is great. Each assignment is unique. And best of all, this job is in demand now. So, what *IS* it?

Real Estate Appraising

Who will become a real estate appraiser?

Anyone. Whether you have a college degree or are taking courses in finance, accounting, business administration, architecture, law, computer science, math, statistics, economics, real estate, history, sociology, English, or more, if you like to solve complex and challenging problems, real estate appraising might be the career for you.

What do appraisers do?

Real property appraisal is the valuation of real estate. Appraisals are required for essentially any type of property, including single-family residences, multi-unit apartment buildings, condominiums, office buildings, shopping centers, industrial sites, hotels, farms, and historical landmarks. An appraiser provides objective and unbiased opinions regarding the value of real property. Depending on the type of appraisal credential, you’ll conduct research, analyze, and then write an opinion of value that lenders, investors, property owners and buyers, accountants, attorneys, or others will use to complete their work. As a trainee, you’ll measure and take photographs, verify legal descriptions, and collect and analyze comparable sales. As you gain more experience and education, you will perform income and expense analysis, analyze leases, complete marketability analyses, study market data, testify as an expert witness, project cash flows, apply statistical tools to analyze comparable sales, estimate depreciation, and much more.

Why should I consider appraising as a profession?

With any career choice, there’s always the question, “will I find a job?” The appraisal workforce is shrinking. On average, appraisers are over the age of 50. This means many jobs are becoming available. In addition, appraisal and real estate organizations, as well as state and federal agencies, have made it a priority to create a more ethnically, racially, and gender diversified appraisal workforce to ensure public understanding and trust, especially when appraising residential properties.

Residential appraisers play a **vital role** in home ownership by providing the appraisals that lenders use for mortgages. The increasing shortage of appraisers to complete timely appraisals, along with the need for a more diverse appraiser workforce, makes real estate appraising a very attractive option.

Where do real estate appraisers work?

Appraisers work for financial institutions, real estate service corporations, and government agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service and local assessor offices. Many appraisers are in business for themselves and set their own schedules. They complete assignments for lenders, underwriters, government agencies, corporations, attorneys, investors, and individual homeowners, among others.

How do I become a real estate appraiser?

To become an appraiser, you will need to meet education, experience, and state licensing or certification exam requirements. Different standards and qualifications depend on the type of appraisal work you would like to pursue. Typically, you will first become an Appraiser Trainee, then advance to a Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser, Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser, or Certified General Real Property Appraiser.

When do I begin taking real estate appraisal courses?

As a college student, you can take courses after you graduate. In fact, the university might offer courses approved by the Appraisal Qualifications Board (AQB) in the state where you plan to practice, so it's possible to earn college degree credits *and* appraisal education licensure credits. Check your university or college catalog to see if real estate appraisal courses are offered.

Where can I take real estate appraisal courses if my university or college does not offer them? The Appraisal Institute offers the qualifying education to become a trainee, licensed, or certified. Every course has been approved by the International Distance Education Certification Center (IDECC) and all 52 state jurisdictions. Courses are developed and taught by knowledgeable and experienced practicing appraisers and are offered in-person through a national network of chapters, online/on-demand, and in a live virtual setting.

For more information, view [How to Become an Appraiser](#).

Note. *Real estate appraisers* may also be referred to as *real property appraisers*. The profession may be referred to as *real estate appraisal profession* or *real property valuation profession*.

How Do I Become a Real Estate Appraiser?

Before diving into the step-by-step process of what you'll need to do to become an appraiser, here are a few things to know about the appraisal world to help you see how the requirements fit into the big picture.

- The Appraisal Foundation (TAF) is authorized by Congress to set the standards and qualifications for real estate appraisers.
- The Appraisal Qualifications Board (AQB) is an independent board of TAF that establishes the minimum and mandatory requirements for real property appraisers to obtain a state license or certification. For more detailed information, view [The Real Property Appraiser Qualification Criteria](#).
- States are required to implement, at the very least, the minimum appraiser licensing and certification requirements established by the AQB. State regulatory agencies may include additional requirements.
- The AQB established minimum criteria for four real estate appraiser classifications. State appraiser classifications may differ, but the minimum criteria must be met.
- The more experience, education, and exams you complete, the more properties you'll be qualified to appraise.

Snapshot of the AQB’s minimum requirements for each appraiser classification

Classifications	Qualifying Education (QE) Hours	College Degree Requirements	Experience Requirements	State Licensing or Certification Exam*
Trainee Appraiser	75	None	None	None
Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser	150	None	1,000 hours in no fewer than 6 months	State exam
Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser	200	College-level education **	1,500 hours in no fewer than 12 months	State exam
Certified General Real Property Appraiser	300	Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university	3,000 hours in no fewer than 18 months. 1,500 hours must be non-residential work	State exam
<p>*Must complete education and experience before taking the exam. ** View AQB Degree Equivalencies</p>				

Q. How do I begin the process of becoming a real estate appraiser?

A. As noted previously, the Appraisal Qualifications Board establishes the minimum qualifying criteria for each appraiser classification. Your state may have additional requirements. You will need to [check with your state](#) regarding the requirements.

Trainee Appraiser

Most states require aspiring appraisers to first become a Trainee Appraiser (also known as an apprentice appraiser or a registered appraiser).

What will I be able to appraise?

Any properties that your state-certified Supervisory Appraiser is permitted and competent to appraise. For example, if your supervisor is a Certified Residential Appraiser, under supervision, you may participate in appraising all one-to-four residential unit properties. Your supervisor will be responsible for training and guidance, and will review, sign, and certify reports as well as inspect the properties you appraise until it is determined you've reached competency.

Learn more about [The Steps to Become a Trainee Appraiser](#).

Step 1: Required Education

Complete 75 hours* of qualifying education.

Qualifying Education (QE) Courses	75 Hours
<i>Basic Appraisal Principles</i>	30
<i>Basic Appraisal Procedures</i>	30
<i>National Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) Course, 15-Hour</i>	15

*Many states also require you to take a Supervisory Appraiser/Trainee Appraiser Course, which is not part of the qualifying education (QE) hours. States may also have additional courses or other criteria necessary. Please [check with your state](#) to view a full breakdown of criteria.

Step 2: Select Your Supervisor

Select a supervisory appraiser who must also complete the *Supervisory Appraiser/Trainee Appraiser* course [Supervisory Appraiser/Trainee Appraiser Course](#). The supervisor must be a Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser or Certified General Real Property Appraiser in good standing, not subject to any disciplinary action within the last two years, or any issues that may affect the supervising appraiser's legal eligibility to practice appraisal.

Important Note: Several states require a Supervisory Appraiser/Trainee Appraiser Course that contains state-specific material not covered in this AI course. Those states include, but may not be limited to, AR, IA, KY, ME, MN, MT, NC, NE, OH, OR, SD, TN, TX, UT, and WV. **Florida licensees are required to take the Supervisory Appraiser/Trainee Appraiser Course in the state of Florida in a classroom format to receive credit.** Participants must confirm approval by contacting their state regulatory agency.

Step 3: Apply for Your Trainee License

Once you've identified your supervisor, you can submit your application for your appraisal trainee license to your state, along with the required fees, fingerprints, and background check information.

Step 4: Start Gathering Work Experience

Once you have your trainee license (if required), you can start working under your supervisor to gain experience hours. Both you and your supervisor will record all completed work for eventual submission and review by the state when you apply for the next level in licensure.

Trainee Real Property Appraiser FAQs

Q. I'm a Trainee Real Property Appraiser. How do I upgrade my credential?

- A. It depends on what type of properties you want to appraise. If you would like to focus only on residential properties, you can upgrade to a Licensed or Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser. If you would like to appraise primarily commercial properties, you can upgrade to a Certified General Real Property Appraiser.

Note: Certified General Real Property Appraisers may appraise all properties (residential and commercial). Courses for this credential focus heavily on commercial properties, so if you wish to learn equally about residential and commercial appraising, consider first earning a residential license, then a general certification.

Q. I would like to appraise residential properties. What is the difference between a Licensed Residential credential and a Certified Residential credential?

- A. There are two different types of residential credentials: Licensed and Certified. As a Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser, you are limited to the types of properties you can appraise. If you are a Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser, you may appraise **any type** of residential property.

Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser

What will I be able to appraise?
You will be able to appraise non-complex one-to-four residential unit properties with a transaction value less than \$1,000,000, as well as complex one-to-four residential unit properties with a transaction value less than \$400,000, as long as you comply with USPAP’s Competency Rule.

Learn more about [The Steps to Become a Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser](#).

Step 1: Required Education

Complete 75 hours* of qualifying education (Trainee Real Property Appraiser courses) or have a valid Trainee Real Property Appraiser* license. Most states will require individuals to have an approved Supervisor as part of the Trainee Appraiser credential.

Step 2: Complete an additional 75 hours of qualifying education

Qualifying Education (QE) Courses	75 Hours*
<i>Residential Market Analysis and Highest & Best Use</i>	15
<i>Residential Site Valuation and Cost Approach</i>	15
<i>Residential Sales Comparison and Income Approaches</i>	30
<i>Residential Report Writing and Case Studies</i>	15

*[Check with your state](#) for any other required courses or criteria.

Step 3: Work Experience

Complete 1,000 hours of experience under a supervisor in no fewer than six months.

Be sure to consider the [AI PAREA](#) alternative for gaining experience.

Step 4: Pass the National Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser Exam

Step 5: Pass a background check

Step 6: Submit your application and fees to your state board

Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser

What will I be able to appraise?

You will be able to appraise one-to-four residential unit properties without regard to value or complexity, as long as you comply with USPAP's Competency Rule.

Learn more about [The Steps to Become a Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser](#).

Step 1: Required Education

Complete 150 hours of qualifying education courses (three Trainee Real Property Appraiser courses, four Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser courses). Most states will require individuals to have an approved Supervisor as part of the Trainee Appraiser credential.

Step 2: Complete an additional 50 hours of qualifying education

Qualifying Education (QE) Courses	60 Hours*
<i>Real Estate Finance, Statistics, and Valuation Modeling</i>	15
<i>Advanced Residential Applications and Case Studies/ Part 1</i>	15
Elective: <i>Advanced Residential Report Writing/Part 2</i> (Appraisal Institute course elective is 10 extra hours)	30

*[Check with your state](#) for any other required courses or criteria.

Step 2: Must hold a bachelor's degree (or equivalent)

[AOB Degree Equivalencies](#)

Step 3: Work Experience

Complete an additional 500 hours of qualifying experience (total 1,500 hours) in no fewer than 12 months. Experience must include complex residential properties. You do not need a supervisor to complete additional experience hours.

Be sure to consider the [AI PAREA](#) alternative for gaining experience.

Step 4: Pass the Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser Exam

Step 5: Pass a background check

Step 6: Submit your application and fees to your state board

Certified General Real Property Appraiser

What will I be able to appraise?

You will be able to appraise **all** types of properties, residential and commercial, as long as you comply with USPAP's Competency Rule.

Learn more about [The Steps to Become a Certified General Real Property Appraiser](#).

Step 1: Required Education

Complete 75 hours of qualifying education courses (three Trainee Real Property Appraiser courses). Most states will require individuals to have an approved Supervisor as part of the Trainee Appraiser credential.

Step 2: Complete an additional 225 hours of qualifying education

Qualifying Education (QE) Courses	225 Hours
<i>Real Estate Finance, Statistics, and Valuation Modeling</i>	15
<i>General Appraiser Market Analysis and Highest & Best Use</i>	30
<i>General Appraiser Sales Comparison Approach</i>	30
<i>General Appraiser Site Valuation and Cost Approach</i>	30
<i>General Appraiser Income Approach/Part 1</i>	30
<i>General Appraiser Income Approach/Part 2</i>	30
<i>General Appraiser Report Writing and Case Studies</i>	30
Electives	30

*Check with your state for any other required courses or criteria.

Step 2: Must hold a bachelor's degree (or equivalent)

[AOB Degree Equivalencies](#)

Step 3: Work Experience

Complete a total of 3,000 hours of qualifying experience in no fewer than 18 months; 1,500 hours (of the 3,000 hours) must be completed in non-residential appraisal work.

Step 4: Pass the Certified General Real Property Appraiser Exam

Step 5: Pass a background check

Step 6: Submit your application and fees to your state board

Certified General Real Property Appraiser FAQs

Q. If I become a Certified General Real Property Appraiser, in addition to commercial properties, can I appraise residential properties?

A. As a Certified General Real Property Appraiser, you are qualified to appraise any type of property. While you may skip taking the required courses for the Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser and Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser credentials and only take the required courses for Certified General Real Property Appraiser, note that the “general” courses focus primarily on commercial properties.

The Appraisal Institute Can Help Build Your Real Estate Appraisal Career

Q. What is the Appraisal Institute?

- A.** Established in 1932, the Appraisal Institute is the world's foremost organization of professional real property valuers and appraisal education. AI fosters and promotes the highest standards of practice through its designation programs, education, and publications.

Q. What makes Appraisal Institute education different from education developed by other providers?

- A.** Thoroughly researched and written by practicing appraisers who are subject matter experts, all Appraisal Institute courses and seminars are peer-reviewed and taught by seasoned practicing appraisers. Appraisal Institute education is backed by its numerous publications, most notably the highly regarded *The Appraisal of Real Estate* and *The Dictionary of Real Estate Appraisal*. These textbooks were developed and updated by industry thought leaders committed to advancing a body of knowledge in real property valuation. No other education provider offers this depth of vetted professional valuation knowledge or the decades of experience publishing textbooks and developing education as the Appraisal Institute.

Q. Does the Appraisal Institute have a mentoring program?

- A.** Join as an AI Student Affiliate, and you'll be connected to a large network of Appraisal Institute members. Your local AI chapter can assist you with finding a mentor or provide information about internships.

The Appraisal Institute Practical Applications of Real Estate Appraisal (AI PAREA) is an alternative to the traditional supervisor and trainee requirement for experience for the Licensed Residential Real Property Appraiser (LR) and Certified Residential Real Property Appraiser (CR) credentials. It's an online program of simulations that shows participants how to apply appraisal theory and methodology to real-world examples, with mentoring and guidance from appraisers who hold the most recognized designations in the profession and have a combined 150 years of experience.

Learn more about [AI PAREA](#)

Q. As a student and as someone just getting started in the appraisal profession, why would I want to become involved with the Appraisal Institute?

A. Developed by leading experts from both the marketplace and academia, AI's best-in-class education is unsurpassed in quality, while our award-winning periodicals and books establish appraisal industry knowledge and advance thought leadership. With exclusive 24/7 online access to the Lum Library, a vast database of articles, bibliographies, books, market research, and data, you can find answers to your questions to bolster your daily work. AI's vibrant community of chapters helps build professional reputations, connecting members with peers and industry leaders to generate valuable contacts and expand business opportunities in the spirit of collaboration and increased visibility. The Appraisal Institute also advocates the interests of its members and the broader profession, making sure your voice is heard on Capitol Hill, in the state houses, and in your local communities by forming strong coalitions at the state and federal levels while focusing on issues critical to appraisers.

Q. Tell me more about the benefits. I'm a student and don't have a lot of expendable income.

A. If you are a university or high school student (junior/senior) who does not practice real property valuation, you may join AI for free!

Contact customerservice@appraisalinstitute.org or call 888-756-4624.

For more information, visit [Join as an AI Student Affiliate](#).

Student Affiliate Benefits	
Discount on Appraisal Institute publications	Appraisal Institute is the recognized leading publisher of professional textbooks for the valuation profession for the past 65 years. More than 70 titles are currently available, including <i>The Appraisal of Real Estate</i> and <i>The Dictionary of Real Estate Appraisal</i> .
Discount on Appraisal Institute education	Appraisal Institute is a globally recognized resource for high-quality education in the field of real property valuation.
Access to Lum Library	The Lum Library is a world-class research library with thousands of articles, documents, industry research, and more.
Complimentary e-subscription to <i>The Appraisal Journal</i>	The Appraisal Journal is a quarterly peer-reviewed technical and academic journal that serves as a forum for information and ideas on the practice and theory of valuation and analysis of real estate and related issues.
Networking	You'll also be automatically connected with your local Chapter for events, education, and networking opportunities in your area, and have access to AI's Career Center , including opportunities to post your resume, apply for jobs, and receive job alerts.

Q. Does the Appraisal Institute offer scholarships?

- A. Yes. The Appraisal Institute Education & Relief Foundation (AIERF) offers scholarships to qualified members and college students. For more information, please visit [AIERF Scholarship Opportunities](#).

Q. Can I receive equivalency credit for any of my college/university coursework towards the Appraisal Institute MAI Designation?

- A. If you are pursuing a master's degree (MSRE or MRED) or an MBA with a specialization in real estate, your coursework may qualify for equivalency credit towards some or all prerequisite education for the MAI.

Q. Is the Appraisal Institute committed to development?

- A. The Appraisal Institute has been accelerating appraiser development initiatives and partnerships to bring about positive change. The Appraiser Development Initiative (ADI) is a collaboration among the Appraisal Institute, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and National Urban League designed to raise awareness of the career opportunities in the real estate appraisal field to attract new entrants.

ADI has been a driving force in education and developing new appraisers by providing scholarship, mentorship, and resources since 2018.

[Learn more about ADI.](#)

Q. Once I earn my license and/or certification, what are the benefits of continuing my Appraisal Institute membership?

- A. We're glad you asked! AI promotes the knowledge, professionalism, and credibility of AI members to clients and users of appraisal services. AI is the only professional organization defending and promoting real estate appraisers in Washington, D.C., and the states. With our One AI Advocacy guiding principles, we have identified key advocacy priorities that help our team set goals and guide our day-to-day work.

When the time is right, we look forward to you joining us.

Learn more about joining AI on our webpage [Why Join Appraisal Institute?](#)

Questions?

Please contact us at (888) 756-4624 or customerservice@appraisalinstitute.org.