# Florida Real Estate Broker

# **Broker Text Book**

Approved by the Florida Real Estate Commission For the Broker Pre-License Course

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# PREFACE

Florida is growing faster than any state in the country, and the real estate industry is a major participant in that growth. A real estate career in Florida can be very rewarding. And education is the foundation for any success achieved. Studies show that the top real estate agents in Florida hold a broker's license as broker associates. These are individuals that have the desire and drive to take their career to the next level and buyers and sellers recognize this professional dedication.

This book is based on the most current syllabus published by the Florida Real Estate Commission for broker's pre-licensing education. The author, David Collins, practiced real estate on a full-time basis for over twenty years and brings a unique insight to understanding the practical application of real estate brokerage.

The author of this book would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of individuals who were instrumental in the success of this book: James Mitchell, Esq., former Assistant State Attorney General assigned to counsel the Florida Real Estate Commission and the Foundation Advisory Commission, provided invaluable insight and understanding of a complicated business; and the Division of Real Estate, with particular thanks to Jo Ellen Peacock, Education Coordinator, for her assistance and direction with the requirements necessary for the development of this publication.

A Big thanks must also go to Mary Gerlach for her professional review and editing efforts of the text and to Philip Armour for the exceptional design of the cover. Finally, many thanks to the thousands of students who gave their input enabling the author to produce what he believes is an exceptional publication.

The author wishes to express his sincerest hopes for your success in the real estate business. Congratulations for taking the first step towards the furtherance of your real estate career!

David L. Collins August 2015

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# **CHAPTER ONE:**

# **BECOMING A REAL ESTATE BROKER**



# TALK THE TALK

- 4 Florida Resident: A person who has resided in Florida for at least four months or a person
- 5 who is residing in Florida with an intent to remain for at least four months
- 6 **Group License:** License issued to sales associates and broker associates when there is proof
- that ownership or control of various properties is substantially held by the same individual(s)
- 8 although the properties are owned in the name of different interlocking or affiliated entities
- 9 Involuntary Inactive: A licensee fails to renew his or her license in a timely manner; also
- defines a licensee's status if the employing broker has his or her license suspended or revoked
- Licensure: The process of applying for and receiving a real estate license
- Nonresident: An applicant or licensee who does not reside in Florida
- Multiple Licenses: Permits a broker to be the broker-of-record for more than one brokerage entity
- Mutual Recognition: Permits a nonresident from a mutual recognition state to obtain an equivalent Florida real estate license by passing a law only exam
- 17 Registration: Authorization by the Division of Real Estate to place an individual on the register
- (record) of officially recognized individuals and businesses
- 19 Voluntary Inactive: When a licensee chooses not to have an active license or when a licensee
- 20 files the proper form with the DRE requesting inactive status

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# AREAS OF CRITICAL CONCERN

- Understand broker applicant requirements and situations that could cause an application to be denied
- Understand the consequences of failing to disclose a prior conviction
- Understand post-license and continuing-education requirements for brokers and sales associates
- Know that it is unlawful to practice with an expired license and understand the consequences of renewing a license without actually completing the continuing education requirement
- Distinguish between licensure and registration
- Understand the requirements of registering real estate business entities and its officers, directors, and partners
- Understand the particulars and requirements of multiple licenses and group licenses
  - Know the rules for change of address, residency, and change of business address

### I. BROKER LICENSURE

A. <u>Broker Requirements</u>: Each prospective licensee must submit to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Division of Real Estate (DRE), a completed application form, electronic fingerprinting, and appropriate application fee. The application must be fully completed with all questions answered. Take special care to answer questions accurately and honestly, especially questions about your personal history, background, and possible criminal activities.

There are certain minimal requirements that must be met by all broker applicants:

Be eighteen years of age or older

• Possess a high school diploma or equivalent

  Be honest, trustworthy, truthful, of good character, and have a reputation of dealing fairly with others

 Disclose if convicted of a crime or if ever entered a plea of nolo contendere (no contest)

 Disclose if ever declared mentally incompetent

Disclose if ever known by any other name

• Disclose if another state has either denied a real estate license application or if such a license has ever been suspended or revoked

 Disclose if a license or registration to practice any regulated profession has ever been denied
Disclose if the applicant has been found guilty of any practice or conduct that

 Disclose if the applicant has been found guilty of any practice or conduct that would have been grounds for suspension or revocation under Florida Real Estate License Law (F.S. 475)

 If discovered by the Department of Business and Professional Regulations, Division of Real Estate, or the Florida Real Estate Commission that an applicant has deliberately withheld information about a conviction, his or her application will be denied. If discovered after the license has been issued, the license may be revoked.

Please note that there is no **FLORIDA RESIDENCY** or U.S. citizenship requirement for an applicant. A non-resident applicant is required to be knowledgeable in Florida real estate law, statutes, and administrative rules. They must meet all educational and testing requirements as prescribed by Florida Statute.

The DRE has thirty days to review your application and check for errors and omissions. The DRE has a maximum of ninety days to inform the applicant if the application has been approved or denied. If the application is denied, the applicant has the right to an administrative hearing under Florida Statute Chapter 120. If the DRE fails to notify an applicant within ninety days of receiving a fully-completed application, the application is deemed approved. The application is valid for two years after receipt by DRE of a fully completed application.

B. <u>Education Requirements</u>: Broker applicants must complete the FREC Course II Broker Pre-License 72-hour course. The FREC Course II may be started after six months of being an active sales associate under the supervision of one or more brokers. However, the state examination can only be taken after complying with the 24-month experience requirement. Florida sales associates must complete the 45-hour post-license education requirement prior to taking the state broker exam. The broker pre-license course can be taken either through the internet (distant learning) on in a live classroom setting.

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The end-of-course examination (as well as the state examination) consists of questions on management, finance, investment, appraising, real estate law, five questions on math, and 6-8 questions based on a closing statement. A private computer-based testing company administers the state exam. Students must pass the end of course exam with a grade of 70% and pass the state examination with a grade of 75%.

Certain individuals are exempt from the requirement to attend a pre-license class. Those types of individuals include:

1. College graduates with a four-year degree in real estate

 2. Out-of-state brokers applying for a Florida broker license under mutual recognition procedures.

C. <u>MUTUAL RECOGNITION</u>: An out-of-state licensed broker in good standing who resides in any state that Florida has a mutual recognition agreement with may obtain a Florida broker's license by submitting an approved application and passing a 40-question examination on Florida real estate law with a passing score of 75% or higher.

If the mutual recognition applicant moves to Florida before passing the law test, then the mutual recognition procedure is no longer available for that applicant. However, the applicant may obtain a Florida license under normal application and requirement guidelines.

Florida has entered into mutual recognition with nine states: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Nebraska, Tennessee, Arkansas, Indiana, Connecticut, and Oklahoma.

D. <u>Experience Requirement</u>: In order to qualify for a Florida broker license, the applicant must have sufficient prior experience. This experience requirement can be satisfied by working as an active sales associate under the supervision of one or more brokers in any state or by working as an active broker in another state for twenty-four months during the preceding five years. Time spent working for an owner-employer does <u>not</u> qualify towards the experience requirement.

The experience requirement for a broker license is also satisfied if the applicant has held a sales associate's license for at least twenty-four months during the last five years while employed and paid a salary by a government agency and performing services of real estate.

E. <u>Broker State Exam</u>: After receiving the end-of-course report for the FREC Course II (and notice of an approved application form the Division of Real Estate), the broker applicant is qualified to take the state examination.

At the testing center, the applicant student will be directed to a user-friendly computer based terminal. After a brief orientation, the student should be quite comfortable with the testing equipment. The applicant will be given a total of 3.5 hours to complete the examination.

The test is graded immediately upon completion and the student is notified of the results.

If the applicant does not pass the examination, arrangements must be made to retake the test at the applicant's convenience. The applicant has the right to review only the incorrect questions and answers on the examination. In addition, the applicant has the right to object to any questions he or she believes to be unfair or inaccurate and request an administrative hearing under F.S 120.

F. <u>Post-License Education Requirement</u>: After obtaining the initial broker's license, the licensee must complete sixty hours of post-license education before the initial broker license expires. Failure to timely complete and pass the post-license education course will result in the broker's license being declared null and void when discovered by the Division.

Every broker's license expires on either March 31st or September 30th, depending on the effective date. The initial license is valid for a period of time greater than eighteen months but less than twenty-four months. For example, if an applicant passed his or her state examination on July 1, 2003, his or her license would expire on March 31, 2005 (21 months). Thereafter, each additional license period is valid for a full two years (March 31, 2007).

Once the applicant has passed the state examination, the DBPR will issue the initial license which contains an effective date (start date). The initial license will also contain an expiration date (either March 31st or September 30th). The licensee must successfully complete sixty hours of post-license education prior to the expiration date.

 G. <u>Continuing-Education Requirement</u>: During the first renewal period after initial license issue, and all renewals thereafter, the licensee is required to complete fourteen hours of continuing education for each two-year license period thereafter, including three hours of core law. This 14-hour continuing-education requirement can be satisfied through classroom attendance or through approved distance learning courses.

### II. LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR SALES ASSOCIATES

 A. <u>Pre-License Requirements</u>: Each sales associate applicant must satisfactorily complete a FREC Course I which is a 63-hour sales associate pre-license course. The pre-license course includes, but is not limited to, real estate law, Florida real estate license law, principles and practices of real estate, and real estate math. Pre-license courses can be taken either through the internet or in a classroom. If taken in a classroom, students may not miss more than eight classroom hours. Students/applicants must pass a one hundred question final examination consisting of forty-five questions on principles and practices, forty-five questions on real estate law, and ten math questions.

 A grade of 70% or higher is necessary to satisfactorily pass the examination. If the applicant does not attain a grade of 70% or higher, the applicant must wait at least thirty days before taking a different final examination. If the applicant does not attain a grade of 70% or higher on the second exam, the entire FREC Course I must be repeated.

Once the FREC Course I examination is passed, the applicant/student will receive an end of course report which is valid for two years from the successful completion date. If the applicant/student does not successfully complete the state exam within that 2-year period, the applicant/student must repeat the entire FREC Course I.

B. <u>Post-License Requirement for Sales Associates</u>: After obtaining the initial sales associate license, the licensee must complete a 45-hour post-license education course before the initial license expires. Failure to timely complete and pass the post-license education course will result in the sales associate's license being declared null and void when discovered by the Division. Every sales associate's license expires on either March 31st or September 30th, depending on when the state examination is passed.

C. <u>Continuing Education Requirement</u>: During the first renewal period after initial license issue, and all renewals thereafter, the licensee is required to complete fourteen hours of continuing education for each 2-year license period thereafter, including three hours of core law. This 14-hour educational requirement can be satisfied through classroom attendance or through approved distance learning courses.

### III. LICENSE RENEWAL

Every real estate license must be renewed by either March 31st or September 30th, depending on the license's effective date. Prior to expiration, each licensee is expected to complete a renewal application and confirm that all educational requirements have been met.

A. <u>Active vs. Inactive</u>: When an applicant passes the state examination, the initial license status is voluntary inactive. In order to activate this new license, the licensee must submit the proper form either at the time of testing at the testing site or submit the proper form to the DRE. For a broker to become active, he or she may either continue to practice under his or her current employer as a broker associate without submitting the proper form or, if he or she chooses to change his or her status to an active broker or transfer to another brokerage as a broker associate, submit a completed form with appropriate information and signatures.

If a person's license is inactive, he or she is prohibited from performing real estate services for a fee. An active license becomes inactive if either:

1. The licensee fails to timely renew, or

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B. <u>Voluntary vs. Involuntary</u>: A licensee may choose to have his or her license placed inactive. To do so, the licensee files the proper form, continues to comply with all education requirements, and pays the appropriate fees. Such a person is said to have his or

The licensee requests inactive status by filing the proper form with the DRE

However, if a licensee fails to either:

her license on VOLUNTARY INACTIVE status.

1. Timely submit a renewal application,

Pay the appropriate renewal fee,
 Complete fourteen hours of continuing education, or

4. When his or her employing broker's license is either suspended or revoked

then his or her license automatically becomes **INVOLUNTARY INACTIVE**. An involuntary inactive license can remain in effect for two years after which time the license becomes null and void.

 An involuntary inactive licensee may elect to change his or her license to active status as follows:

1. If the license has been Involuntary Inactive for twelve months or less, then the licensee must submit the proper renewal form, pay the appropriate fees (including late fee), and confirm that the continuing education requirements have been fulfilled.

2. If the license has been Involuntary Inactive for more than twelve months but less than twenty-four months, the licensee must submit the proper renewal form, pay the appropriate fees (including late fee), and show completion of twenty-eight hours, in-class or distant education (reactivation credit).



AUTHOR'S NOTE: If a sales associate is working for a broker who becomes either suspended or revoked, then all associates working for that broker become involuntary inactive. Those sales associates will then have to move their licenses to another broker through the proper registration method.

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Reporting Requirements: Licensees must notify the DBPR/Division of Real Estate within 30 days of a conviction of any "crime". Failure to do so could result in revocation of the license.

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License Renewal Exception of Armed Forces Members: D. When a licensee is in good standing with the DRE and is inducted into active military duty, all renewals or license requirements are excused for the period of active duty and up to an additional six months after active duty terminates. In order for this exception to apply, the licensee must not actively participate in real estate during the exemption period. Otherwise, all renewal requirements must be fulfilled.

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A licensee who is a spouse of a member of the Armed Forces of the U.S. is exempt from all renewal requirements (provided the spouse is on active duty) and remains exempt for an additional period of six months after the spouse's military discharge. To be eligible for the exemption, the licensee must not engage in the practice of real estate activities for profit and does not reside in Florida.

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### IV. REGISTRATION VS. LICENSURE

Real estate sales associates and brokers are licensed and are afforded the privilege to practice real estate in Florida. To be valid and current, those licenses are registered with the DRE. Registration simply means placing on record the name and address of each licensed broker and sales associate, the name of the business and the business address, and the name and address of each officer, director, partner, or general partner. If an officer, director, partner, or general partner is unlicensed, his or her name is simply registered with the DRE with the understanding that no services of real estate may be offered or performed.

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Failing to properly register an individual or business entity will subject the licensee and/or business to a monetary fine and citation of \$200.00

When the proper form has been submitted and received by the

DRE, the licensee has a current and valid (active or voluntary inactive) license.

### ٧. **TYPES OF LICENSE STATUS**

Effective:

1.

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Real estate licensees can have the following types of status:

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- 2. <u>Ineffective:</u> When a license is cancelled or ceases to be in force.
  - a. Cancelled: Anytime that a broker resigns, dies, or fails to renew his or her license, the registration of all licensees under that broker are cancelled unless a replacement broker is registered within fourteen days.
  - b. Suspended: A temporary penalty issued against a licensee not to exceed ten years. During the time of suspension, the licensee may not practice real estate.
  - c. Cease to be in force: If a licensee fails to provide the DRE with any type of required notification (e.g. change of address information), the license ceases to be in force after the 10-day notification period lapses.
  - d. Involuntary Inactive: When a licensee fails to renew his or her license or when a broker has his or her license either suspended or revoked, licenses placed with that broker are involuntarily inactive.
- 3. <u>Void:</u> When a license has either been revoked or has expired.
  - a. Revoked: A permanent loss of the license ordered by FREC
  - b. Expired: Failure to properly renew license (also defined as involuntarily inactive). License becomes null and void two years after original expiration date.

### VI. MULTIPLE LICENSES

An active broker may be issued multiple licenses that allows a broker to be the broker of record for more than one brokerage entity, provided the broker can demonstrate a genuine business need and demonstrate that no conflict of interest exists among the brokerage entities.

### VII. GROUP LICENSE

Sales associates and broker associates who are employed by an unlicensed owner of real estate (such as a developer) may be issued a group license which will entitle the licensee to work in sales for separate projects provided the licensee can demonstrate that the same person(s) is the driving force behind both projects. A licensee possessing a group license is still considered to have only one employer. Additionally, a person holding a group license can only market the product owned by that unlicensed owner-employer.

### VIII. CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If a broker changes his or her main business address, the DRE must be notified within ten days. Failure to provide the change-of-address information could result in a citation and cause the license to "cease to be in force" until the proper change of address is submitted.

In addition, if a licensee changes brokers the new employing broker must notify the DRE within ten days of the change. Failure to provide the change-of-address information could result in a citation and cause the license to "cease to be in force" until the proper change of address is submitted.

The DRE requires that all licensees and brokerages provide their current physical and mailing addresses. Current mailing address is defined as a licensee's physical address where mail is received or a post office box number if mail is not delivered to the licensee's residence. If a licensee changes their mailing address they are required to notify the DRE within ten days. Failure to make proper notification could result in a fine up to \$500.

### IX. SERVICES REQUIRING REAL ESTATE LICENSURE

The services of real estate include the following:

- 1. **B**uving
- 2. Advertising
- 3. **R**enting (or rental information list)
- 4. **S**elling
- 5. Auctioning
- 6. **L**easing
- 7. **E**xchanging

Remember: BAR SALE

Who is required to hold a real estate license?

Answer: Anyone who

- 1. performs any service of real estate.
- 2. in the state of Florida,
- 3. for someone else, <u>and</u>
- 4. for compensation or the mere expectation of compensation

 must possess a valid and current real estate license unless they are exempt by law. Compensation can mean anything of value such as money, reimbursement of expenses, or other consideration of value. If any of these four requirements are not performed, no real estate license is required.

### X. EXEMPTIONS FROM LICENSURE

state

Certain types of individuals are exempt from licensure although technically it could be argued that they are performing real estate services for another, in the state of Florida, for someone else, and for compensation. Those types of exempt individuals include the following:

1. Any salaried employee of the owner of an apartment building or complex when renting units from an on-site rental office and he or she is not being paid a commission

A salaried manager of a condominium or co-operative when leases do not exceed one year and he or she is not being paid a commission
 Employees of the State of Florida when performing real estate services for the

4. Attorneys when performing duties within the scope of their attorney-client relationship

Persons who have been given a power of attorney are exempt for signing documents only
CPA's when performing duties that fall within the scope of their respective profession
Anyone who is court appointed
Persons who rent mobile home lots or recreational vehicle lots in mobile home or travel trailer parks
An employee of a real estate developer when paid a salary only and no commission
An employee of a corporation involved in buying or selling company-owned property as long as it is incidental to his or her employment
A partner in a real estate partnership who receives no more than his or her normal pro-rata share of profits
Persons selling cemetery lots
Television and radio announcers and persons in public relations and advertising media provided the service performed is incidental to their employment in advertising
Hotel and motel clerks for short-term rentals

# <u>SUMM</u>ARY

- ➢ Broker applicants must be at least eighteen years of age, possess a high school diploma or equivalent, and possess good character. In addition, broker applicants must have prior experience either working as a sales associate under the supervision of a broker or brokers for at twenty-four months out of the preceding five years. Out-of-state experience is acceptable. Applications could be denied if the applicant fails to meet the minimum requirements.
- Failing to disclose a prior conviction could result in denial of the application or subsequent license revocation.
- ➤ Brokers must complete sixty hours of post-license education before the initial Broker license expires and must complete fourteen hours of continuing education for each license renewal period thereafter.

> It is unlawful to perform real estate services unless a license is current, active, and valid. Licensees who falsify their renewal applications by claiming to have attended the required educational requirements may have their licenses revoked upon discovery by the Florida Real Estate Commission.

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> Licensure means having the privilege of practicing real estate for compensation. Registration is placing on record the name and address of all individuals who are affiliated with a real estate brokerage either as a broker, sales associate, broker associate, officer, director, or partner.

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> Brokerages must register with the Division of Real Estate the name and address of all officers, directors, and partners of real estate brokerage corporations and partnerships.

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Multiple licenses are issued to brokers only who desire to be the broker of record for more than one brokerage entity. Group license is available to sales associates and broker associates who work for an owner-developer who is unlicensed to broker real estate.

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The Division of Real Estate must be notified within ten days anytime a licensee changes his or her address or employer and when a business entity changes its address.

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# CHAPTER ONE QUI

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Which applicant does not meet the minimum requirements for the issuance of a Florida broker license?

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Α. A Montana (non-mutual recognition state) broker who has been active for the last three years and completed FREC Course II

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A Florida attorney who has been a member of the Bar for two years and an B. active Florida Sales Associate for three years, but has not completed FREC Course II

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C. A Florida Sales Associate who has been active for six years, has a 4-year degree in real estate, but has not completed FREC Course II D. A broker from Alabama (mutual recognition state), active for two years, but has

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not completed FREC Course II.

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Brad intentionally failed to disclose a felony conviction on his broker license application.

2 3 4			ard background check, the Division of Real Estate discovered the conviction. ollowing is the most likely outcome?
5 6 7 8 9 10 11		A. B. C. D.	The application will be approved if it was a minor felony.  The application will require a letter of recommendation prior to approval.  The application will be denied.  The application will be denied only if Brad had his out-of-state real estate license revoked.
12 13	3.	What i	s the post-license education requirement for broker associates?
14 15 16 17 18		A. B. C. D.	14 hours 45 hours 60 hours 72 hours
20 21	4. educat		will happen if a Florida real estate licensee fails to timely complete the post-license uirement?
22 23 24 25 26 27 28		A. B. C. D.	Automatic suspension Cancellation Null and void Involuntary inactive
29	5.	What i	s the experience requirement for a broker applicant?
30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39		A. B. C. D.	Must have worked as a licensed sales associate for an active real estate broker, or been an active broker in another state, for twenty-four months of the preceding five years  Must have worked for an active real estate broker for one year  Must have worked for either a broker or owner/developer for twenty-four months of the preceding five years  Must have held an active sales associate license for one year
40 41 42	6. started		Associate Donna has moved from Port St. Lucie, Florida, to Destin, Florida, and g with a new broker. Which statement is correct?
43 44		A.	Donna must inform the Division of Real Estate of her change of address within ten days.
45 46		B.	Donna must inform the Division of Real Estate of her change of address within sixty days.
47 48		C.	It is the responsibility of Donna's new broker to inform the Division of Real Estate of Donna's new address.
49 50 51		D.	Donna does not have to inform the Division of Real Estate if she files for a new homestead.

1 2	7. broker	Which age en	of the following will allow a broker to be the broker of record for more than one tity?
3 4 5 6 7 8 9		A. B. C. D.	Group license Multiple licenses Complex license Developer license
10 11	8.	Δ arou	up license:
12	0.	A giot	up licerise.
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		A. B. C. D.	Is used for large real estate brokerages Allows licensees to work for various properties owned and developed by the same individual(s) although the properties are owned in the name of different interlocking or affiliated entities Allows brokers to be the broker of record for more than one real estate brokerage Is available when a licensee chooses not to have an active license and files a form requesting a group license
22 23	9.	Bill wo	orks for broker Jeff, but broker Jeff's license has just been suspended for a year.
24	-		status will now be considered:
25		^	la effective
26		A.	Ineffective
27		B.	Void
28		C.	Cancelled
29 30		D.	Involuntary inactive
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32 33 34 35 36 37	throug reporti	t 4, 20 th the ping dire	has the following experience working as a licensed Florida Sales Associate: 06, through March 17, 2008, working for Broker Janet. From March 18, 2008, present, he has been working for owner/developer Johnson Development, Inc., ctly to its President Bo Johnson who now wants Fred to obtain a broker license. Is for a Florida Broker's license?
38		A.	Yes, because Fred has the necessary work experience
39		В.	No, unless he is also holds a 4-year degree in real estate
40		C.	No, because he does not have the necessary experience
41		D	Yes, since he is presently working for an owner developer
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11.	Tara	holds a	sales	assoc	ciate li	cense	from <sup>-</sup>	Tenr	nessee	(a mutu	ıal rec	ognition	state	) for
seven	years	. After	moving	g to T	Гатра	, she	desires	s to	obtain	Florida	sales	associat	e lice	ense
under	Mutua	I Recog	nition ru	ıles.	Is she	eligibl	e?							

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- A. Yes, if she has at least one year's experience No, she must complete the 63-hour FREC Course I since she is not eligible for
- 6 7

B.

- mutual recognition Yes, if she passes the 40-question state law exam C.
- 9 10

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No, since she has more than one year experience, she is only eligible for a D. broker's license under mutual recognition