

ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE EXAMINATION

Introduction

The Architectural Practice Examination, (APE), is a national examination. It was developed by AACA in conjunction with the Architects Registration Boards and has been in operation in the present form since 2000. It is coordinated nationally by AACA which provides all examination documents and monitors implementation and examination results. Quality assurance processes are in place for all aspects of the APE to ensure nationally consistent application of examination procedures. The examination is based upon the *AACA National Competency Standards in Architecture*.

The *AACA National Competency Standards in Architecture* are those standards which have been developed by the profession and accepted by all of the Architects Registration Boards in Australia as defining the minimum level of knowledge and experience necessary for a person to enter the architectural profession.

The APE and Registration as an Architect

Architects Registration Boards in all Australian States and Territories have legislated duties to determine eligibility for registration.

On successful completion of the APE candidates may submit to any Registration Board in Australia for registration as an architect. Registration in any State or Territory entitles an architect to reciprocal recognition for registration in all States and Territories and in New Zealand.

The Structure of the APE

The APE is a three part process:

- Part 1 Logbook and Statement of Experience
- Part 2 National Examination Paper (NEP)
- Part 3 Examination by Interview

Candidates must satisfactorily complete all three parts to pass the APE.

Assessment procedures for the APE are based on the *AACA National Competency Standards in Architecture*. The *AACA National Competency Standards in Architecture* (NCSA01) can be obtained by referring to the [Publications](#) page.

Details of the examination process including formal requirements for entry, the mandatory competencies for Part 1 and the hours required in relation to each can be found in *A Guide for Candidates (NCSA01/GC)* available on the [Publications](#) page, and in the *Logbook of Experience in Architectural Practice (NCSA01/LB)*.

The following is a summary of the examination process. For full details of the process, please consult the documents referred to above.

Part 1 – Application and Submission of Logbook

Applicants for the APE should contact their respective Architects Registration Board for an application form and Logbook.

When candidates submit for entrance to the APE they are required to support their application with a record of practical experience in an AACA *Logbook*. This requires documentation of 3000 hours of practical experience across seven 'mandatory competencies' and describes that experience in a 'Statement of Practical Experience'. A satisfactory Logbook and Statement is required for eligibility to undertake Part 2.

Part 2 - The National Examination Paper (NEP)

Having satisfied Part 1 candidates may be admitted to the NEP. The NEP is a 'multiple choice' examination conducted on the same day in all jurisdictions offering the exam. It normally consists of seven or eight 'scenarios' which give rise to a total of between thirty and forty possible answers some of which are correct and others, incorrect. Candidates are required to identify the correct answers.

Penalty marking applies if incorrect answers are identified. To succeed in the NEP a candidate must achieve 60%.

There is no pre-determined number of candidates that will succeed in the Paper in any given examination and no adjustment is applied to the results, except in cases where it has become clear that questions or answers have been capable of misinterpretation. A moderation process has been developed to cater for such circumstances if they arise.

Part 3 - Examination by Interview

Candidates who successfully complete Part 2 - the NEP - are invited by the relevant Board to submit for an interview conducted by two experienced practitioners, qualified to conduct APE Interviews. Interviews are conducted over a period of approximately 45 minutes to one hour and are informed by the Logbook and Statement material submitted by the candidate in support of his/her application to sit the APE. The interview will seek to confirm the experience claimed by the candidate and to consider the candidate's response to practice situations that may be beyond the candidate's personal experience. Reports of interview are prepared by the examiners using a proforma report sheet. Unsuccessful candidates are provided with an indication of the competency areas found unsatisfactory during interview. Records of the results (pass/fail) of interview are kept by the relevant Board and by AACA.

Satisfactory completion of the interview is completion of the APE. Successful candidates may apply for registration to their Architects Registration Board.

APE RESULTS 2000 – 2007

Results of Part 2 (NEP) from 2000 to 2007

The NEP results as a percentage pass rate for all States and Territories from year 2000 to year 2007 are set out below;

2000	83%
2001	68%
2002	72%
2003	66%
2004	65%
2005	82%
2006	91%
2007	92%

The examination became a closed book exam in 2005.

Results of Part 3 (Examination by Interview) from 2000 to 2007

Satisfactory completion of the Part 3 expressed as a percentage pass rate for all States and Territories from year 2000 to 2007 are set out below:

2000	90%
2001	90%
2002	86%
2003	90%
2004	86%
2005	81%
2006	82%
2007	82%

A total of 2840 candidates have been successful during this period.

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES AND NATIONAL CONSISTENCY OF THE APE

General

Quality assurance for the APE is achieved through a range of measures in the administration of the exam, national monitoring procedures, APE publications and review processes.

The APE is normally undertaken by candidates in their home State or Territory which administers the examination between once and twice a year, depending on the number of applications. To ensure national consistency of procedures, the various State and Territory Boards have adopted the documentation and quality assurance procedures promulgated by AACA as the coordinating body.

Each jurisdiction appoints a suitably qualified Convenor and examiners to conduct Part 3 interviews; the Convenor also takes responsibility for oversight of the APE within the jurisdiction. A National Convenor is appointed by AACA to oversee the APE and report to AACA on a regular basis. AACA has established a 'National Assessment Panel' which among its other responsibilities monitors APE procedures.

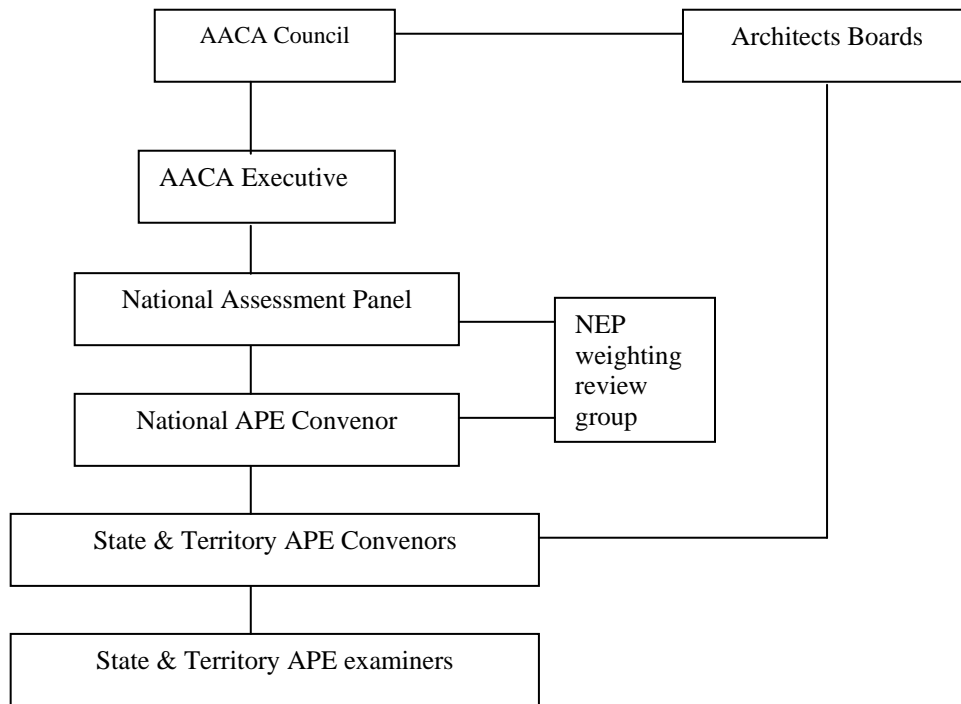
APE Convenors confer regularly on procedures and review each examination 'round'.

The APE has been adopted by Architects Registration Boards in all jurisdictions for the purpose of determining whether candidates have achieved a satisfactory level of practical architectural experience for registration.

All aspects of the APE are coordinated through the AACA structure and office, including policy formulation, publication of support documents, review and monitoring of implementation and outcomes.

All policy decisions on the APE are taken by consultation with the key participating groups as identified below and ratified at Council, which is comprised of Chairpersons and Registrars of all Architects Registration Boards.

The key participating groups in the APE process



Quality Assurance in Relation to the Three Parts of the APE

Part 1 Logbook

The AACA Logbook provides a national structure for determination of candidates' eligibility to proceed to Parts 2 and 3.

It defines agreed mandatory experience and provides a consistent structure for documentation of experience. There is provision for supervising architects to sign, verifying the candidate's experience as documented. In addition, candidates must supply a Statutory Declaration attesting to the truth and accuracy of the Log Book and Statement of Practical Experience as a record of their architectural experience.

On receipt of Logbooks by Boards they are checked to ensure all required documentation has been provided, and to ensure apparent compliance with the minimum hours required under each of the mandatory competencies for approval to proceed to Part 2.

The operation of the Logbook is monitored by Convenors and discussed at regular national meetings of Convenors.

Part 2 - National Examination paper (NEP)

Writing and setting the exam

An 'item bank' of scenarios and questions is under continuous development and is maintained by the National Convenor and AACA.

Scenarios and questions may be submitted by members of the profession in accordance with the AACA standards for design of questions. An annual meeting of Convenors approves questions for inclusion in the item bank.

The National Convenor is responsible for coordination of the setting of examination papers for each year. Draft papers are prepared taking into account matters such as appropriate level of difficulty, consistency between papers and avoidance of State specific issues which may disadvantage candidates and relationship to the *National Competency Standards in Architecture*. A weighting review panel scrutinises the papers which are then approved by the National Assessment Panel for independent review by an architect academic who also has legal qualifications. The paper/s may be returned to the weighting group and National Convenor for review. Throughout this process, issues such as clarity, fairness and relevance to the purpose of the examination are considered.

Conduct of the exam

All States and Territories conduct the NEP on the same day once or twice a year depending on the number of candidates presenting.

Exam room procedures are provided to Boards for conduct of the exam on the allocated day. These procedures detail protocols for the appropriate conduct of the examination. Candidates do not retain a copy of the exam paper. Beginning in 2005, the exam has operated as a 'closed book' exam. Normal security procedures are used in each jurisdiction to ensure security of exam documents.

Marking of the exam and release of results

State and Territory Architects Registration Boards mark the exam with an AACA prepared marking template. Each marking session includes a process of checking of marking and recording of results. Results are approved by the State Convenor for submission to AACA along with analysis of candidate performance against each item on the paper.

Upon receipt by AACA of all results they are tabulated and issued to State and Territory Convenors. The National Convenor then initiates a teleconference of all participating jurisdictions to discuss any issues that may have arisen during the conduct of the particular paper. There is provision at this stage for 'moderation' of the outcome of particular questions if the analysis indicates this may be required.

There is no 'statistical moderation' of results. All candidates who receive 60% or better pass the exam. The National Convenor approves release of results to candidates. Each jurisdiction informs candidates of their results using a 'proforma' letter. Candidates have access to a procedural appeal process.

Part 3 - Examination by Interview

Appointment of examiners

Part 3 examiners are nominated by each of the State and Territory Architects Registration Boards for annual endorsement by AACA. They are practitioners with a minimum of five years' experience subsequent to registration, and are required to satisfy CPD requirements. New examiners are briefed by the State/Territory Convenor and provided with AACA Guidelines for Assessors, the Logbook and any relevant procedures applied in the jurisdiction. Examiners are required to participate in briefing and de-briefing sessions at least once a year or after each examination. Their performance is monitored by Convenors in each jurisdiction and by the National Convenor.

Conduct of the Part 3 interview

Interviews are conducted according to national guidelines to ensure equity, fairness and appropriateness of interview procedures.

Candidates are assessed against the *AACA National Competency Standards in Architecture* and reports of interview are prepared using proformas. Candidates with an unsatisfactory result are advised by the relevant Board of aspects of the Competency Standards in which they failed to demonstrate sufficient knowledge or understanding. Results of interviews are provided to AACA.

Satisfactory completion of Part 3 is regarded as completion of the APE. Successful candidates may apply for registration in any jurisdiction in Australia.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE APE

The Architectural Practice Examination (APE) includes a protocol for review of the process after each five year period. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the APE continues to provide an appropriate, transparent, and reliable mechanism by which persons wishing to register as architects in Australia can have their qualifications and experience assessed against the *AACA National Competency Standards in Architecture*.

APE DOCUMENTATION

AACA has produced a suite of documents that underpin the APE, providing guidelines and procedural requirements to ensure national consistency and quality outcomes.

The key APE documents are:

The National Competency Standards in Architecture (NCSA 01)

The NCSA01 provides the assessment criteria for the APE and for other examinations (available on the [Publications](#) page).

A Guide for Candidates (NCSA01/GC)

The NCSA01/GC includes an overview of the APE, as well as Review of Academic Equivalence and the National Program of Assessment (available on the [Publications](#) page).

Reference Guide for APE Candidates (NCSA 01/REF/G)

The NCSA01/REF/G Provides reference information for intending APE Candidates (available on the [Publications](#) page).

The Logbook of Experience in Architectural Practice (NCSA01/LB)

The NCSA01/LB is Part 1 of the APE and is available from State and Territory Registration Boards or the AACA.

Sample Part 2 exam papers and a selection of typical references are available on [Publications](#) page.

Candidates are also advised that the RAIA *Practice Notes* are an essential reference and other relevant texts are identified.