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and
functions
architects
accreditation
council
of australia

aaca

ARCHITECTS ACCREDITATION COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (AACA)

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Background

The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia Inc ('AACA') was established in 1974. The original nominating bodies included all State and Territory Architects Registration Boards ("the Boards") and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects ('RAIA').

The RAIA resigned its membership in 1996 and in mid 2004 the legal structure of AACA changed from an entity established under the Associations Incorporation Act to a company limited by guarantee. This new structure was deemed more appropriate in the current corporate governance environment.

The AACA is the national organisation responsible for establishing, co-ordinating and advocating national standards for architects in Australia and for establishing and maintaining mutual recognition agreements with overseas authorities. The Council has a number of sub-committees some of which are permanent, such as the National Assessment Panel (NAP). In addition ad hoc committees are formed from time to time to address specific issues, such as:-

- Schools Accreditation and Recognition
- Architectural Practice Examination
- National Registration
- National Competency Standards in Architecture (NCSA)

Objectives of AACA

1. To promote common academic standards throughout Australia for registration of architects, and to facilitate national and international recognition of qualifications.
2. To assess architectural education and training in such ways as the Council shall determine.
3. To co-ordinate acceptable standards of architectural education for national and international mutual recognition agreements.
4. To define and, where appropriate, co-ordinate acceptable standards of practical experience for registration.
5. To provide for the examination of persons seeking registration.
6. To accredit applicants who meet the standards of the Council and grant an AACA certificate.
7. To acquire and disseminate information on conditions for registration which must be satisfied in particular States, Territories and countries.
8. To define and where appropriate, co-ordinate acceptable standards for architects seeking the annual renewal of their registration
9. To recommend to nominating bodies that the AACA certificate be accepted as a qualification for registration and other purposes.
10. To negotiate mutual recognition agreements with appropriate authorities in other countries.

11. To compile, maintain and transmit professional records to architects registration authorities, to other nominating bodies, or to equivalent bodies in other countries, for architects desiring this service.
12. To provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information relevant to the purposes of the nominating bodies including consideration of co-ordinated approaches to legislative and statutory provisions administered by the State and Territory Registration Boards provided always that in pursuit of this objective the AACA will act only in an advisory capacity towards the nominating bodies.

Structure

AACA has as its nominating bodies each State and Territory Architects Registration Board. Each Board nominates two persons, the President/Chair if that person is an architect, or otherwise another member of the nominating body who is an architect, and the Registrar or another person as their nominee. The nominees are the members of AACA. The members elect an executive committee (directors) on a biennial basis. The executive committee meets on a regular basis and all members of the company meet annually.

The Council employs an executive officer and a small staff located in Canberra.

Roles of the Boards

The role of each State and Territory Architects Registration Board is primarily to fulfil its statutory obligations as determined by the legislation in its jurisdiction.

Each Board is responsible for administering its own Act and in all cases the primary role is to protect the public interest. The Boards are not able, nor do they attempt to delegate any of their responsibilities to AACA. The Boards use established procedures to assist them in their role of administering their State/Territory legislation.

Functions of AACA

1. Architectural Practice Examination (APE)
2. Review of Academic Equivalence (RAE)
3. Review of Graduate Equivalence (RGE)
4. National Program of Assessment (NPrA)
5. Accreditation of Architecture Programs in Australia
6. Migration Assessment Programs
7. Special Projects

1. Architectural Practice Examination (APE)

AACA facilitates the examination of professional practice throughout Australia. The standards for testing are the *National Competency Standards in Architecture*, developed for the purpose of defining the knowledge and experience required at entry level to the architectural profession.

The Architectural Practice Examination is handled uniformly throughout Australia and consists of a three part process. Initially candidates submit a Log Book setting out their experience which is assessed to ensure adequate experience has been gained to reasonably fulfil the public expectations of an architect. The second part of the process is a written examination which is offered nationally three times per annum. The final process is an oral examination.

Upon satisfactorily completing the three stages of the APE AACA issues a certificate which is used by the State and Territory Architects Registration Boards as a basis for determining eligibility for registration, in addition to any local requirements that their legislation may require.

2. Review of Academic Equivalence (RAE)

The Review of Academic Equivalence facilitates the assessment of academic qualifications in architecture held by persons educated overseas (or educated overseas and in Australia) who are resident in Australia and who wish to become registered as architects in Australia. The RAE requires applicants to attend an interview at which their student academic portfolio is examined to determine whether the overseas qualification is of sufficient standing to enable a candidate to sit for the Architectural Practice Examination (APE).

3. Review of Graduate Equivalence (RGE)

The Review of Graduate Equivalence facilitates the assessment of academic qualifications in architecture held by persons educated overseas (or educated overseas and in Australia) who are resident in Australia and who wish to become registered as architects in Australia, who no longer have a student portfolio of work, but who have substantial work experience.

4. National Program of Assessment (NPrA)

AACA conducts a National Program of Assessment on an annual basis. This process enables individuals who do not hold a recognised degree in architecture an alternative route to registration based upon their experience in the field of architecture.

The National Program of Assessment is rigorous and is designed to ensure that candidates who are successful in the process are of an equivalent standard to those individuals who have received a formal academic qualification in architecture. Individuals who pass the National Program of Assessment are required to sit for the Architectural Practice Examination prior to applying for registration.

5. Accreditation of Architecture Programs in Australia

AACA facilitates the accreditation of architecture programs offered by Australian Schools of Architecture.

The accreditation of each program in architecture is carried out on a five yearly basis with annual visits to the Schools to ensure that the standard of graduates is acceptable to the Architects Registration Boards.

6. Migration Assessment Programs

AACA is contracted to the federal government to provide a review of the academic qualifications in architecture of prospective migrants who wish to enter Australia. This program is carried out on a fee for service basis and forms a significant part of AACA's activities.

7. Special Projects

AACA is actively involved with the APEC Architect Project which aims to reduce the barriers to international cross border registration of architects. Australia has now signed Bi-lateral Agreements

under the APEC Architect framework with Chinese Taipei and Japan, and a Tri-lateral Agreement with Singapore and New Zealand.

Australia has also signed a mutual recognition agreement with Hong Kong for recognition of course accreditation processes. The agreement is effective from December 2010 and forms the first stage of an intended 2-stage process leading to registration through the APEC Architect framework.

AACA co-operates with the New Zealand Registered Architects Board in relation to matters of mutual interest including compliance with the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTMRA). The TTMRA has been established between the Australian and New Zealand governments and mandates, among other things, the professional recognition of those registered in the occupation 'architect' in New Zealand and Australian jurisdictions.

Interaction with Australian Institute of Architects (AIA)

The AIA is the professional association representing the interests of its members. It provides services to its members in the form of continuing education, recommending standards of professional conduct, representing the profession in the political arena, and other matters of interest to the members of the organisation.

AACA and AIA have formed joint working parties to address issues of common interest such as professional indemnity insurance and continuing professional development.

Financial Issues

AACA receives income from a number of sources including fees charged for the Architectural Practice Examination, the Review of Academic Equivalence, the Review of Graduate Equivalence, the National Program of Assessment, Migration Assessment Programs, and levies on State and Territory Architects Registration Boards. AACA is self funding; it receives no government or public support.

Current Nominating Bodies

The Architects Practice Board of South Australia
NSW Architects Registration Board
Architects Registration Board of Victoria
The Board of Architects of Queensland
Architects Board of Western Australia
Board of Architects of Tasmania
Australian Capital Territory Architects Board
Northern Territory Architect Board