



Architectural Practice Examination

Procedure for Candidates

Preparation for the Architectural Practice Examination

Key documents are available on the Architectural Practice Examination section of the [AACAA website](#):

National Standard of Competency for Architects

The National Standard of Competency provides the assessment criteria for the Architectural Practice Examination

National Standard of Competency Procedure for Candidates Booklet

Reference Guide for Architectural Practice Examination Candidates

Provides reference information for intending Architectural Practice Examination Candidates

Logbook of Experience in Architectural Practice

Log Sheets

Sample National Examination Paper scenarios

A number of preparatory programs are available; and most Boards run an annual briefing for candidates.

Contact your [architects registration board](#) for further information.

1. Preamble

The AACA Architectural Practice Examination is a nationally consistent competency based assessment. The Architectural Practice Examination comprises three parts - completion of a Logbook and Statement of Practical Experience, the written National Examination Paper and an Examination by Interview with experienced architect practitioners.

Candidates who have satisfactorily met the requirements of all three parts of the Architectural Practice Examination may apply for registration to the architects registration board in any state or territory in Australia.

The architects registration boards in all Australian states and territories have legislative duties to determine eligibility for registration as an architect.

2. Competency Based Assessment

The [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) is the overarching document that establishes the standard for assessment of architectural education and professional competency prior to registration as an architect in Australia.

It identifies the primary activities and responsibilities that are fundamental to the general practice of architecture and in relation to which an architect is expected to demonstrate competence in the delivery of professional services.

The [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) consists of four Units of Competency including Design, Documentation, Project Delivery and Practice Management, which comprise 70 individual Performance Criteria, grouped into Units and Elements and underpinned by five Knowledge Domains.

The Standard applies to Australian and New Zealand architecture program accreditation, Overseas Qualifications Assessment, the National Program of Assessment, the Architectural Practice Examination and the Assessment of Overseas Architects.

The AACA has maintained the National Standard of Competency (previously known as the National Competency Standards in Architecture) since 1990, in collaboration with the architectural sector and Australian state and territory architects registration boards.

Assessment in the Architectural Practice Examination is generally to the level of a complex project.

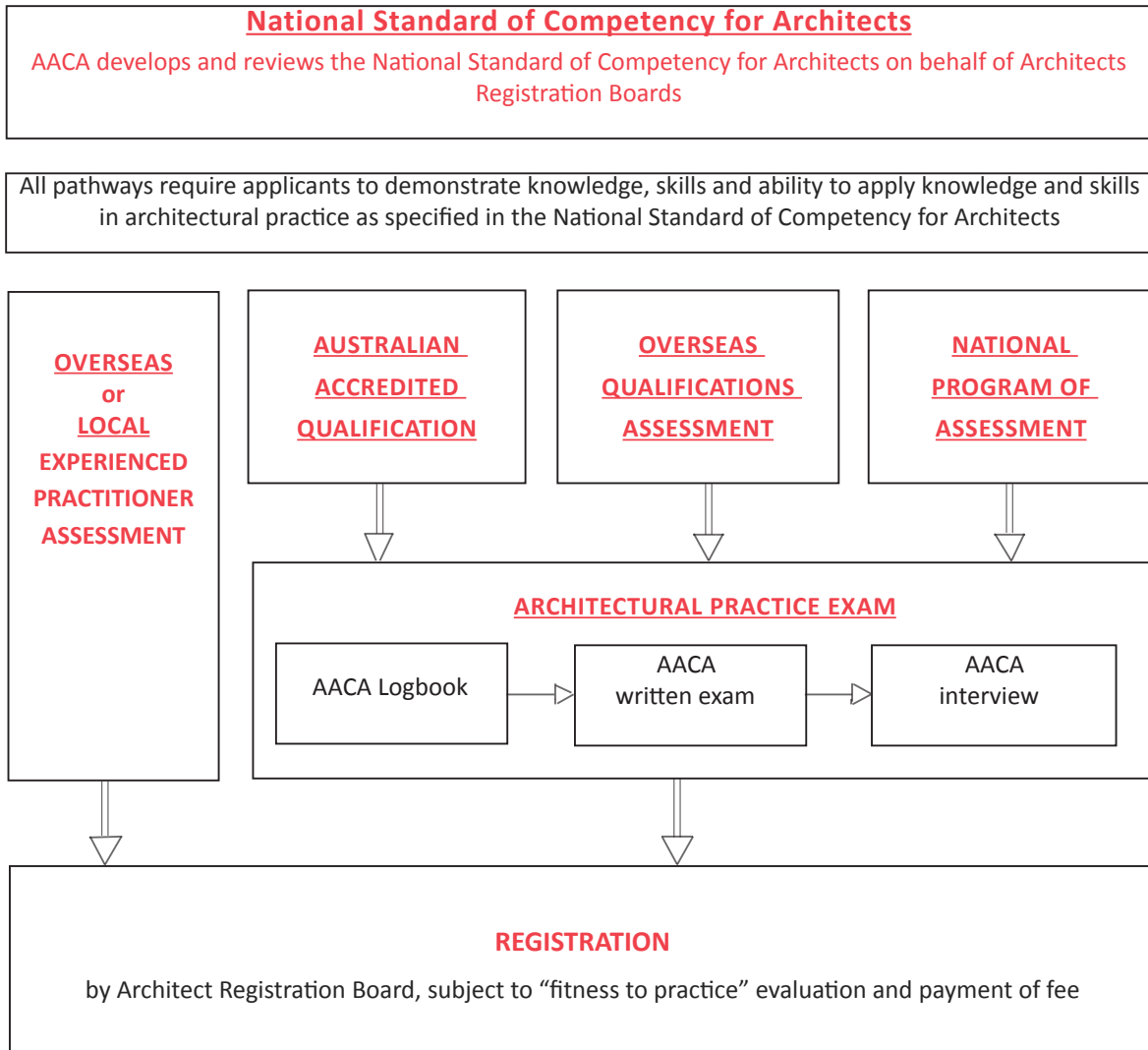
2.1 Definition of a Complex Project

Typically a project of medium scale or larger, that requires the skills and knowledge to deliver the resolution and intergration of complicated aspects including but not limited to: siting, planning, structure, services, materials, composition and configuration.

Not all architectural projects follow this format, or even result in a built outcome, but this is the level of competency required by an architect tested in AACA programs.

It is not a requirement that the hours recorded in the Logbook are from tasks completed on a 'Complex Project', however, it should be considered that Parts 2 & 3 of the Architectural Practice Examination will examine candidates under the context of a 'Complex Project'.

3. Pathways to Registration as an Architect in Australia



4. The Architectural Practice Examination

4.1 Architectural Practice Examination Part 1

4.1.1 Introduction

To be eligible for admission to the Architectural Practice Examination, Candidates must have:

4.1.2 Eligibility

- a. an approved qualification/entry path;
- b. undertaken a period of practical experience recorded in an AACA Logbook; and
- c. completed a Statement of Practical Experience relevant to Performance Criteria from the [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#).

Approved entry pathways to the Architectural Practice Examination include:

- a. An accredited qualification in architecture from an Australian school of architecture in New Zealand, Singapore or Hong Kong;
- b. an overseas qualification in architecture assessed by the AACA as being equivalent to a currently accredited qualification in architecture from an Australian school of architecture; or
- c. successful completion of the AACA National Program of Assessment (NPRA).

4.1.3 Application

Application for the Architectural Practice Examination is made to the relevant state or territory architects registration board. Applications include:

- Application Form downloadable from the state or territory architects registration board website
- Completed electronic logbook
- Statement of Practical Experience
- Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of all the documentation submitted
- Evidence of approved qualification/entry path.

The application process varies according to the jurisdiction. In some jurisdictions the application can be completed online.

Dates for both the submission of log books and national examinations are set by the [state or territory architects registration board](#).

4.1.4 Practical Experience Requirements

All candidates must have:

- a minimum of 3,300 hours of experience that ranges over all required 15 Performance Criteria - refer 4.1.6
- a minimum of two years' experience*
- a Statement of Practical Experience.

** experience may be gained as an employee of an architectural firm, or as an employee in a building design firm, or as an employee in a firm in an allied field in the construction industry, or in government agencies; or gained in a self employed capacity.*

Experience gained by candidates when working independently or working as an employee of a non-architectural firm must be gained at executive (decision making) level.

Candidates whose entry path is either an accredited qualification from an Australian school of architecture in New Zealand, Singapore or Hong Kong or an AACA certified overseas qualification must have:

- a minimum of 12 months experience subsequent to successfully completing this qualification in architecture; and
 - 12 months of logged experience in Australia.
- Candidates whose entry path is an AACA certified overseas qualification may commence logging the 12 months of experience in Australia from the date of arrival in Australia. Where a candidate was required to undertake further education he or she may begin logging Australian experience from the date of successful completion of further study.

Candidates whose approved entry path is via successful completion of the AACA National Program of Assessment (NPrA) may log hours used for entry to the NPrA providing they meet the requirements of:

- a minimum of 3,300 hours of experience that ranges over all 15 Performance Criteria; and
- 12 months of logged experience in Australia.

Experience accumulated independently (not under the supervision of an architect) must be at Executive Level to be logged. See 4.1.7.

Admission to the Architectural Practice Examination is conditional upon satisfaction of logging 3,300 hours of experience that ranges over all required 15 Performance Criteria at the required levels and submission of a Statement of Practical Experience.

4.1.5 The Logbook

The purpose of the Logbook is to record in a condensed format, the Candidate's fulfilment of the Practical Experience required for the Architectural Practice Examination.

Experience in the practice of architecture must have been obtained during the previous ten years and in the categories identified in the Logbook.

Candidates with fewer than 3,300 hours of practical experience meeting the Performance Criteria will not be admitted to the examination.

Periods less than the full-time equivalent of eight weeks continuous duration may not be credited. Check with your state or territory board if you need clarification.

4.1.6 Relevant Performance Criteria

Candidates are required to have experience in each of the following 15 Performance Criteria:

1. Design: Project Briefing

1.2 Establishment, analysis and evaluation of client project requirements and objectives.

1.4 Identification of factors that may impact on client project requirements and objectives.

2. Design: Pre-Design

2.1 Identification, analysis and integration of information relevant to siting of project.

2.2 Application of principles controlling planning, development and design for the project site.

3. Design: Conceptual Design

3.4 Design response incorporates assessment of relevant legislation, codes and industry standards.

5. Documentation: Detailed Design

5.3 Evaluation and integration of regulatory requirements.

6. Documentation: Documentation

6.1 Identification and adoption of a strategy, program and process of documentation integrated through all project stages to enable project delivery.

6.2 Continuing coordination and integration of information and project material from relevant consultants, specialists and suppliers.

6.3 Incorporation of the project requirements and objectives in accordance with Project Brief and approved Detailed Design.

6.4 Timely completion and communication of accurate and comprehensible documents that will include, as required, drawings, models, specifications, schedules and other relevant modes of information.

6.8 Project documentation is in accordance with, and appropriate to, the project contract and project procurement procedure.

7. Project Delivery: Procurement

7.1 Identification of available procurement methods and assessment of relevance and application to the project.

8. Project Delivery: Construction Stage

8.3 Identification and application of the process and administration systems needed to fulfil all obligations under project contract.

8.4 Construction progress and quality is systematically reviewed and monitored as required under the contract provisions.

8.5 Identification and application of all relevant processes

required for certification of monetary claims, project variations, extensions of time, project instructions or other administrative responsibilities under the contract provisions.

4.1.7 Levels of Experience

Three levels of experience have been identified:

Executive - experience gained as the principal decision-maker on a project.

Participant - experience gained as a team member or operative working under the instruction or supervision of a responsible person.

Observer - experience gained by careful observation of procedures and practices carried out by others.

A total minimum of 3,300 hours of logged architectural experience is required in the 15 Prescribed Performance Criteria listed above.

Logged experience may be:

- a. all at Executive level, OR
- b. a composite of Executive, Participant and Observer level experience as follows:
 - at least 40 hours of architectural experience in each of the 15 Prescribed Performance Criteria (PCs 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.4, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.8, 7.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5);
 - at least 40 hours of architectural experience at Executive level in each of at least five of the 15 Prescribed Performance Criteria;
 - a maximum of 160 hours of Observer level experience in total across all of the following Prescribed Performance Criteria 1.2, 7.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5.

Note that these are the ONLY Prescribed Performance Criteria in which Observer level experience is accepted.

Note: Experience gained by candidates when working independently or working as an employee of a non-architectural firm must be gained at executive (decision making) level to be logged .

4.1.8 Statement of Practical Experience

The objectives of the Statement are:

- a. to provide evidence of satisfaction of the practical experience requirements; and
- b. to provide Assessors with information on the Candidate's practical experience, which will be referenced in the Architectural Practice Examination Part 3 Interview.

The Statement of Practical Experience word limitations

- If all experience is logged under the supervision of an architect: maximum of 2,000 words; or
- if some or all logged experience is not under the supervision of an architect: a maximum of 3,000 words.

The Statement should be well considered, precisely expressed and cross-referenced to the Performance Criteria. Project photographs must not be included. Candidates are encouraged to request that their supervising architect/s review the Statement.

Content Candidates should select the project, or projects, that best illustrate the application of the Performance Criteria. This provides a basis for Assessors to explore the nature and level of experience in the Part 3 of the Architectural Practice Examination, Examination by Interview.

The Statement should begin with a summary CV (maximum one page – exclusive of the word limit) to given an overall view of the Candidate’s professional experience.

The Statement must identify the jurisdiction/s in which the experience was gained, i.e. either in Australia or overseas. Project address details must also be provided.

Format The Statement must be presented in a sequence that indicates the scope of work undertaken by the Candidate. It must include an indication of the Candidate’s role and level of responsibility in the particular project stage that has been identified.

Sufficient project details should be provided to allow the Assessors to appreciate the scope of work, its cost, floor area and nature of construction.

The work of the two years immediately preceding the Architectural Practice Examination application should be emphasised. Experience obtained more than ten years prior to application to the Architectural Practice Examination should not be included in the Statement. This information should be included in the summary CV.

The Statement must be presented in chronological order of experience. Where Candidates have not obtained their experience under the supervision of an architect, their Statement may be up to 3,000 words in length.

The Statement must be headed with the full name of the Candidate and the Candidate’s name must appear on each page. Where the experience has been gained in an architectural practice, the name and registration number of the supervising architect must be included on each page.

Statements that do not conform to these requirements will not be accepted.

4.2 Architectural Practice Exam Part 2: The National Examination Paper

4.2.1 Introduction

The objective of the National Examination Paper is to provide a reliable and valid test of knowledge and application of the National Standard of Competency for Architects. Candidates must pass the National Examination Paper as a condition of admission to Part 3, the Examination by Interview.

4.2.2 The Process

The National Examination Paper is a 70 minute 'closed book' **on-line** scenario style paper. The National Examination Paper is conducted in each state and territory of Australia by the responsible architects registration board in accordance with nationally consistent procedures and a national timetable.

The National Examination Paper and answers are not provided to candidates on completion of the exam.

The National Examination Paper consists of nine 'scenarios'. Each scenario comprises 5 multiple choice questions with each multiple choice question having 4 responses. Candidates are required to identify the correct statement.

Special Needs Accommodation:

Special needs accommodation is the arrangement made to assist candidates who have physical or personal conditions that require support on the day of the exam. If you have a condition that may affect your ability to take the exam, you should submit your request in writing to your Board and provide current supporting documentation from an appropriately qualified practitioner.

The documentation will be used to verify a condition and provide relevant and useful information in assessing appropriate adjustments or accommodations. Your application will be reviewed and you will be contacted if we require additional information. If your request is approved you will be contacted by email.

Candidates should note that reviewing applications for special needs accommodation can take time. If you think you may require special needs accommodation, please inform the Board when you lodge your application by the Part 1 Submission deadline as per the advertised date on your Board's website.

There is no pre-determined number of Candidates who will succeed in the Paper in any given Part 2 session and no adjustment is applied to the results, except in cases where it has become clear that scenarios or statements have been capable of misinterpretation. A moderation process has been developed to cater for such circumstances if they arise.

Candidates will be notified in writing of their results ('successful' or 'unsuccessful') by the responsible architects registration board, generally within three weeks of sitting the National Examination Paper. All candidates will be provided with feedback on their results.

Candidates must pass the National Examination Paper as a condition of admission to Part 3, the Examination by Interview.

Candidates who are unsuccessful in Part 2 may re-apply at the next or any subsequent National Examination Paper without being required to resubmit for Part 1, provided they are sitting within two years from the date of first notification of being unsuccessful in Part 2. Candidates may only undertake Part 2 in the same jurisdiction in which they submitted for Part 1. An updated Logbook and a revised Statement of Practical Experience must be provided along with a new Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of all information in the documentation submitted.

Candidates who do not re-sit within two years from the date of first notification of being unsuccessful in Part 2 are required to re-apply for entry to Part 1. These Candidates may apply in any jurisdiction. When re-applying for entry to Part 1 they must provide a Logbook, a Statement of Practical Experience that satisfy the eligibility criteria and a Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of the documentation.

Contact your [Board](#) for further information.

4.3 Architectural Practice Exam Part 3: Examination by Interview

4.3.1 Introduction

The objective of the Examination by Interview is to enable the Assessors, by discussion with the Candidate, to confirm that the Candidate has demonstrated adequate knowledge and/or experience of the National Standard of Competency for Architects sufficient to satisfy requirements for registration.

4.3.2 The Examination Process

The Candidate is examined on their range of work and experience by two experienced architect practitioners (known as Architectural Practice Examination Assessors). The Part 3 traverses the majority of Elements across the Performance Criteria. The interview will seek to confirm the experience claimed by the Candidate and also consider the Candidate's response to practice situations that may be outside the Candidate's personal experience. The Candidate will be expected to be familiar with topical professional issues and must be prepared to discuss them. The Assessors will take an overall view of the Candidate's education and experience, and ability to deal with situations in a mature professional manner.

The Assessors will decide whether, on balance, the Candidate possesses the knowledge and skills, and application of these skills in architectural practice and can perform to the standard expected of an architect in Australia.

The Part 3 is not restricted to discussion on the Candidate's Logbook and Statement of Practical Experience; it can explore knowledge in both actual and hypothetical situations. Candidates may be examined across a variety of procurement issues and they should be able to demonstrate competence in contracts that may be administered by an architect.

The duration of a Part 3 interview will be between 45 minutes and one hour.

Candidates are not permitted to take any equipment, notes, reference materials, phones, recording or other devices into the Examination. Candidates are not permitted to contact the Assessors either before or after the examination. Any breach of exam conditions may result in candidates being excluded from Architectural Practice Examination.

Candidates will be notified of the result of Part 3 by the responsible state or territory architects registration board.

Unsuccessful candidates will be advised in writing that they have been unsuccessful, identifying the area/s in which deficiencies have been identified.

4.3.3 Eligibility for Re-admission

Unsuccessful Candidates may apply for re-admission to undertake Part 3 at the next session or a later date, provided it is within two years of the date of notification of success in Part 2. Candidates may undertake Part 3 in another jurisdiction providing they submit the required documentation.

Candidates applying for re-admission to Part 3 will be required to submit an updated Logbook, a revised Statement of Practical Experience and a Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of the documentation submitted.

4.4 Architectural Practice Exam Grievances and Appeals

4.4.1 Grievances

Candidates may lodge a grievance in writing with the relevant state or territory architects registration board within 21 days of the date of notification of the result to which the grievance relates.

- a. Candidates must clearly state the grounds of any grievance. Causes external to the Examination will not normally constitute acceptable grounds for a grievance or any subsequent appeal.
- b. A grievance or any subsequent appeal may only relate to procedural matters.
- c. The grievance will be referred to the state or territory Architectural Practice Examination Convenor. Where an aggrieved Candidate is personally known to the Architectural Practice Examination Convenor, a Senior Assessor may be substituted.
- d. Upon receiving a notice of grievance the Architectural Practice Examination Convenor (or Senior Assessor where substituted) may take whatever action is appropriate to resolve the grievance.
- e. The Architectural Practice Examination Convenor may recommend, to the state or territory architects registration board, that the Candidate be re-examined. Where a Candidate is to be re-examined the outcome of the contested Part of the Examination to which the grievance relates will be ignored.
- f. In attempting to resolve a grievance, the Architectural Practice Examination Convenor may consult with or seek the advice from the Convenor of any other state or territory or a person nominated by the National Architectural Practice Examination Convenor. Any person consulted by the Architectural Practice Examination Convenor must not participate in any appeal process pursuant to paragraph 4.4.2.
- g. Anything said or done by the Architectural Practice Examination

Convenor and the Candidate arising from or relating to the resolution of a grievance shall be confidential and not admissible in any legal proceedings. The provisions of 131 of the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) apply to any communication or documentation arising from or relating to the resolution of a grievance, and for this purpose any communication or document shall be considered an attempt to negotiate a settlement of the grievance.

- h. Generally, where a grievance cannot be resolved by the Architectural Practice Examination Convenor within 14 days, the Architectural Practice Examination Convenor shall: certify that attempts have been made to resolve the grievance; certify that those attempts have been unsuccessful; and advise the Candidate, and the relevant state or territory architects registration board.

4.4.2 Appeals

Within 14 calendar days of receipt of notice of advice from the Architectural Practice Examination Convenor that the grievance cannot be resolved, the aggrieved party may lodge notice of appeal with the relevant state or territory architects registration board with payment of any prescribed fee and stating clearly the grounds of appeal.

Any decision of a state or territory architects registration board may be the subject of further review in accordance with the law applicable in that state or territory.

Note: Candidates are advised that if they intend to lodge a grievance or appeal it is their responsibility to check with the architects registration board in the state or territory in which they undertook the Examination as to the procedures they should follow. Candidates considering an appeal from any decision of a state or territory architects registration board should obtain legal advice.

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