



# Experienced Practitioner Assessment Overseas Practitioners

## Guide for Applicants

This program provides an alternate 'fast-track' pathway to registration in Australia for overseas qualified experienced practitioners with experience at the executive level in complex projects and are not eligible for registration under existing mutual recognition agreements.

Successful completion of this program allows applicants to bypass the Architectural Practice Examination (APE) and apply directly for registration as an architect with their state or territory architects registration board.

Assessment of applications is conducted via an administrative review for eligibility verification, followed by a panel-based Competency Assessment Interview.

For more information see [FAQs](#).

To apply use this [application form](#).



## 1. Introduction

Applicants must demonstrate an applied understanding of the required Performance Criteria from the [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) (NSCA). Through a portfolio of Complex Projects\*, applicants will demonstrate appropriate experience and practice of architecture at an Executive Level (principal decision-maker), as well as capacity to exercise professional skill as an architectural practitioner in Australia. Applicants must be familiar with relevant Australian contracts, regulations and legal requirements as required across the specified Performance Criteria within all scales of projects.

Applicants submit a Professional Portfolio of 4-6 built work Complex Projects\*, their CV, two professional references and mapping of their project work to the Performance Criteria from the NSCA using the supplied template. These documents become the Assessable Items. Applicants also submit relevant academic and registration documents, included in the Supporting Items.

*\*Complex Project: Typically a project of medium scale or larger that requires the skill and knowledge to deliver the resolution and integration of complicated aspects including but not limited to: siting, planning, structure, services, materials, composition and configuration. A complex project is demanding in its ordering and organisation of multiple occupancy and/or special purpose user requirements and requires the integration of cultural, social, environmental and technical issues.*

*Generally, single dwelling residential projects would not be considered a complex project.*

Assessment of applications is conducted via an administrative review for eligibility verification, followed by a panel-based Competency Assessment Interview.

## 2. Eligibility

- a. Minimum five-year (or equivalent) professional qualification/s in architecture
- b. Seven-years relevant professional postgraduate experience with a minimum of three years providing architectural services on complex projects practising at Executive Level (principal decision-maker)
- c. 12 months relevant professional experience in Australia within the last three years
- d. Resident in Australia
- e. English language proficiency

If you are unsure of your eligibility after reading this section, contact the AACA.

### 2.1 Eligibility Definitions

- a. **Minimum five-year (or equivalent) professional qualification/s in architecture** – applicants must hold a professional qualification in architecture issued overseas that was obtained via coursework.

Notes:

1. The professional qualification/s allows a person to practice as an architect in the country of origin. Applicants should provide evidence of previous or current registration / licensure, if held. It is recognised that registration is not a prerequisite to the practice of architecture in some countries

2. Some qualifications include a compulsory period of practical experience; this does not contribute to the minimum period of study.
3. Local practitioners holding an accredited Australian architecture qualification should see the alternate guide and application form for Local Experienced Practitioners.

- b. Seven years relevant professional post graduate experience\*** including three years of architectural services on complex projects, operating at the executive (principal decision-maker) level.

Notes: Work experience gained prior to the completion of the five years of professional study does not count towards the required seven years of post-graduation experience.

Applicants should provide evidence of previous or current registration / licensure, if held. It is recognised that registration is not a prerequisite to practise as an architect in some countries.

- c. 12 months relevant professional experience\*** within the last three years in architectural services operating at the executive (principal decision-maker) level in **Australia**. (*Refer to Notes on page 6 of this document*)

*\*The experience should be:*

1. *Indicated in the applicant's Resume*
2. *Based on the equivalent of full time work hours*

- d. Resident in Australia** - supply proof of residency, either:

- High quality scan of photo identification page of Australian passport or
- Permanent or relevant temporary visa as issued by Department of Home Affairs.

- e. English Proficiency** – required if the qualification was undertaken in a language other than English, or English is not the applicant's first language. Evidence of English proficiency may be:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Test Certificate with overall band score of 6.5 or above, issued **within the last three years or**  
Letter from current employer stating that the applicant has a standard of English appropriate for professional practice in architecture

### 3. Assessment Process

- a. Submission is lodged electronically** by applicant.
- b. Eligibility Verification.** All submitted documentation is reviewed to confirm all eligibility and submission criteria have been met.
- c. Panel-based Competency Assessment Interview.** A face-to-face interview will be conducted with two experienced architect Assessors to discuss the applicant's Assessable Items and determine the extent to which the required Performance Criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects are met and the applicant's ability to practice to the standard expected of a practising architect in Australia.

Applicants are required to bring one printed copy of their Assessable Items to the interview. No additional documentation is to be presented at the interview.

The interview will generally be one hour in duration and is usually held at the Architect Registration Board in the State or Territory where the applicant wishes to apply for registration. Interviews for applicants in NSW are held at the AACA Office.

- d. Outcome.** Following the conduct of the Panel Interview, applicants will receive a written advice stating the outcome of the assessment.
- Successful Applicants will be eligible to apply to their Architect Registration Board for registration as an architect.
  - On request, applicants are issued with a Skills Assessment which may be used for the purpose of migration.
  - Unsuccessful Applicants will be advised of the NSCA Performance Criteria that they were unable to demonstrate and will be advised as to what pathway remains open to them for registration. Unsuccessful applicants are not eligible to re-apply through the Experienced Practitioner Assessment Program.
- e. Lodging a complaint.** Applicants may lodge a complaint in writing with the AACA within 21 days of the date of notification of the Outcome. Applicants must clearly state the grounds of any complaint. A complaint may only relate to procedural matters. Causes external to the assessment will not normally constitute acceptable grounds for a complaint. The complaint process is as follows:
1. AACA's acknowledges the receipt of the complaint lodged. (Within 3 working days of receipt).
  2. The AACA may request the interview assessors to provide a response to the matters raised by the Candidate in regard to the conduct of the interview.
  3. The CEO in consultation with the AACA National Advisory Panel (the expert technical panel who provides advice to the CEO on AACA assessment programs) considers:
    - AACA procedures for the Experienced Practitioners Assessment (EPA)
    - complaint lodged by the Candidate
    - any other relevant documentation
  4. A determination is made as to whether the Candidate does have grounds for the complaint lodged, in which case the outcome of the interview is put aside, and an additional interview will be arranged at no cost to the candidate in new assessors. Alternatively, if the complaint is dismissed, the initial interview outcome stands.
  5. Generally the outcome of complaints is advised within 28 days of the receipt of the complaint.

## 4. Submission Requirements

Applications for the Experienced Practitioner Assessment - Overseas Practitioner program are submitted electronically. Hard copy applications will not be accepted. All attached documents should be provided as pdfs.

Documents not in the English language must be translated. See the Guidance document, Section 7. Translation of Documents for further information.

No documentation will be accepted where an applicant represents themselves as an Architect for any work completed in Australia as this may be a breach of Architect Acts in each state or territory. Refer to the Guidance document noted in Section 6 '[The Regulation of the Architect Profession in Australia – An Overview](#)' for further information.

The AACA reserves the right to request further supporting documentation from applicants if required.

Only the items described in this section will be accepted by AACA

If forged, altered or falsified documents are submitted to AACA at any time, the application will not proceed, no refund of fees will be made and the relevant authorities will be notified.

## 4.1 Application Form

See the PDF [Application Form](#)

The Application Form contains the following sections:

1. Personal Details
2. General School Education
3. Tertiary Education in Architecture
4. Architect Recognition
5. Assessable Items
6. Supporting Items.

## 4.2 Supporting Items

Supporting documents to be attached as per the instructions on the on-line form (all scans of originals in colour and with a resolution of 300 dpi or more):

1. **Academic Documents** – for each qualification .pdf copies in original language and in English when applicable:

- Degree Certificate/Testamur
- Academic Transcript.

If an original certificate can't be provided, AACA may accept a letter from the institution confirming the applicant's documentation

OR

- Outcome Certificate from previous AACA qualifications assessment.  
*Applicants that have previously completed any stage of the AACA Overseas Qualifications Assessment (Provisional Assessment, Final Assessment, Combined Assessment, Review of Academic Equivalence (RAE), Review of Graduate Equivalence (RGE)) or Migration Skills Assessment may submit their Outcome Certificate (irrelevant of whether the outcome was positive or negative) and pay a reduced fee.*

2. **Proof of Residency** – pdf copy of either:

- Permanent or relevant temporary visa as issued by the Department of Home Affairs
- High quality colour scan of Australian Passport at photo identification page.

3. **Evidence of registration/licensure (if applicable)** –pdf copies to be supplied in original language and in English when applicable

4. **English Proficiency** – if required- pdf copies of:

- IELTS Test Certificate with overall band score of 6.5 or above issued within the last three years OR
- Letter from current employer stating that the applicant has a standard of English appropriate for professional practice in architecture.

5. **Proof of Name Change** – pdf copy, if applicable

## 4.3 Assessable Items

Assessable items, compiled in a **single A4 PDF document** (maximum file size 50mb):

1. **Current Resume** (maximum 4 A4 pages) in chronological order (timeline instead of project based). Resume to include a statement of how the applicant has adapted their overseas experience with an applied understanding of Australian professional standards, codes and regulations.

- 2. Two References** (maximum two A4 size pages for each reference) – from persons who can comment on the applicant’s professional capacity to operate to the standard expected of an architect in Australia within the last three years, one of whom must be a practising architect currently registered in Australia. Contact details of referees providing the written references must be supplied within the reference as they may be contacted. One reference should come from a referee within the applicant’s current place of work, and the second reference should be from a referee from a different organisation. The second reference could be prepared by a consultant, builder or client who was involved in one or more of the portfolio projects. Referees are required to comment on the applicant’s:
- professional capacity to operate to the standard expected of an architect in Australia
  - Project Portfolio of complex projects prepared specifically for this assessment
    - note the projects where the referee worked with the applicant
    - executive level role in the relevant projects
  - professional experience with specific reference to the performance criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects against which the Experienced Practitioner Assessment is benchmarked.
- 3. Project Portfolio** – (maximum two A4 size pages per project) of a minimum of four and a maximum of six complex built-work projects demonstrating fulfilment of the relevant Performance Criteria of the National Standard of Competency for Architects. (*Refer to the definition of complex projects on page 2 of this document*). Projects should be chosen to best demonstrate the extent to which the required Performance Criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects are met, indicating the application of knowledge and skills in architectural practice which is the standard expected of a practising architect in Australia.

For each Project included in the Portfolio, applicants must include the following information:

- Project Name and number (numbered 1 through to 4, 5 or 6 as necessary)
- Location (including suburb, city, state, and country)
- Building Type
- Estimated Cost
- Project date of completion (month and year)
- Period of time (by month and year) of the applicant’s involvement with the Project at the Executive level
- Brief statement outlining the applicant’s role in the project. This should be a title (such as Project Leader, Design Leader, Senior Architectural Assistant, etc.) and a simple description if relevant.
- Detailed description of the project focusing on the applicant’s executive level role. The detailed description must include explicit comments about the applicant’s role to demonstrate achievement of the required Performance Criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects.
- Relevant images used to convey a visual representation of the complex project (noting the limitation of two A4 pages per project). Detailed drawings or diagrams are not required.

Notes:

- a. The complex projects included in the portfolio may be from either Australia or overseas. Where an applicant does not have an example of a complex built work project in Australia, they must include the required four complex built work projects from overseas and supplement this with one or two Australian project examples (not necessarily complex in nature) where the applicant has been operating at the executive (principal decision-maker) level.
  - b. The complex project experience in at least four projects should not be older than ten years. Older projects may be submitted for the two additional projects.
  - c. Where applicable, applicants may note their job title for overseas projects included in their portfolio as 'architect', should they have been recognised as an architect in that country and they held that role for the Project. For Australian based projects where an applicant has worked at the executive level, an applicant may not refer to themselves as an architect or similar, but can consider using any of the following as may best for their role in the project: 'project leader', 'team leader', 'design leader'.
  - d. An executive (primary decision making) role may include reporting back to the director or other senior staff members, especially in a larger firm
  - e. For smaller scale projects that may not meet the description of 'complex projects', within the two pages assigned to the project, the applicant must include their detailed rationale as to why the selected project should be considered as complex and retained in the portfolio of complex projects
  - f. Single residences and other projects that do not meet the definition of complex projects can be submitted as a fifth or sixth portfolio project in addition to the four complex projects.
  - g. One or two projects that have at least passed the DA stage, or are under construction can be submitted in the portfolio as long as the majority of projects (four projects out of six) has been built
  - h. There is no template provided for the Project Portfolio. Applicants typically address the project portfolio requirements through a mix of 50-75% text and the remainder of the portfolio space dedicated to relevant images.
4. **NSCA Performance Criteria Checklist.** Using the [one page checklist](#) supplied in the on-line form, indicate which projects from the applicant's portfolio map to each of the NSCA Performance Criteria. Minimum of one project must be mapped to each Performance Criteria. Applicants must demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills in architectural practice for each performance criteria

## 5. Performance Criteria

Full details of the National Standard of Competency for Architects and the required level of performance is described at the [website](#):

### 1. Design: Project Briefing

- 1.1 Preparation and endorsement of an agreement between client and For Australian Architect. This agreement will clearly communicate terms, services to be provided, and fees appropriate for the scale and type of project.
- 1.2 Establishment, analysis and evaluation of client project requirements and objectives
- 1.3. Assessment of project budget and timeframe against project requirements and objectives.
- 1.5. Knowledge of different procurement processes available and evaluation of the impact these have on the project.

### 2. Design: Pre-Design

- 2.2. Application of principles controlling planning, development and design for the project site.
- 2.3. Evaluation of factors influencing and impacting on project cost.
- 2.5. Attainment of approval from client of project budget and timeframe.

### 3. Design: Conceptual Design

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

### 4. Design: Schematic Design

- 4.8 Analysis of schematic design in regard to cost planning and timeframe to comply with client and project requirements.
- 4.9 Obtain approval for the design from client and/or relevant stakeholders.

### 5. Documentation: Detailed Design

- 5.7 Resolution of project design to address budget and time

### 6. Documentation: Documentation

- 6.3 Incorporation of the project requirements and objectives in accordance with Project Brief and approved Detailed Design.
- 6.7 Establishment of quality assurance systems to ensure consistency and completeness of project documentation in accordance with the requirement for the project brief, project timeframe and project budget

### 7. Procurement

- 7.1 Identification of available procurement methods and assessment of relevance and application to the project.
- 7.2 Selection of procurement method incorporates assessment of the impact on all phases of project including design, documentation and project delivery.
- 7.3 Selection of procurement method incorporates assessment of the impact on contractual arrangements between all project stakeholders.
- 7.4 Selection of procurement method incorporates assessment of the impact on selection, contracting and scope of work of consultants and specialist service providers.
- 7.6 Knowledge and application of all administration and principles for the selected procurement method and associated contracts.



## 8. Project Delivery: Construction Stage

- 8.1 Selection process for appropriately qualified contractors is in accordance with procurement method and project contract.
- 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.
- 8.7 Identification and application of appropriate and consistent systems for record keeping and maintenance of document revisions.
- 8.8 Ensure that warranties, schedules, as built documentation, certificates, approvals and other project information are completed and handed to the client and relevant authorities as required under the contract.

## 9. Practice Management

- 9.1. Knowledge and implementation of appropriate practice model to ensure efficient, effective and ethical professional service.
- 9.6. Knowledge and application of professional ethics and ethical practices in respect to practice management and provision of professional service.
- 9.7. Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements and obligations in regard to architectural practice, practice management and registration as an architect

## 6. Useful Information

[National Standard of Competency for Architects](#)  
[Industry Profile: The Profession of Architecture in Australia](#) [Regulation of Architects in Australia – An Overview](#)  
[Architects' Model Statutory Code of Professional Standards and Conduct](#)  
[Relevant State and Territory Architect Registration Boards](#)

## 7. Translation of Documents

### Translation

All documents submitted to the AACA must be translated into English if the original copy is in another language. A complete translation of each document must be provided. The AACA does not accept partial or extract translations.

Labels and annotations contained in diagrams and sketches (or similar) used in the project portfolio that are not in English are not required to be translated if they do not affect the understanding of the content.

For documents translated in a country outside Australia, authorities in the country where the translation is made must approve the translator. The [International Federation of Translators](#) provides a list of associations.

For documents translated in Australia, the AACA accepts translations by translators accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). Refer to the [website](#) for a list of members.

## 8. Fee

Fee for this program is currently AUD \$2,500.

The reduced fee for applicants who have previously had their overseas qualification/s assessed by AACA is \$1,200. See Submission Requirements – Supporting Items 4.2 to see if this may be applicable to you. **If you aren't sure, check with AACA before you make your payment.**

Please see the Forms and Fees page on the AACA website for the current fees. All fees are quoted in Australian dollars (AUD).

Fees are not refundable once an application has been submitted.

AACA only accepts online credit card payments by VISA or MASTERCARD. All credit card transactions will be subject to a surcharge.

Follow the instruction in the on-line form Applicants will receive an email confirmation and payment receipt after payment has been successfully made.

Payment details are protected during the transmission using 256-bit SSL encryption. AACA does not store any part of the credit card number, expiry date or CCV number on our server. If you have any questions regarding online payments, please email us to [mail@aaca.org.au](mailto:mail@aaca.org.au) or call us on (02) 8042 8930 (within Australia) or +61 2 8042 8930 (outside Australia)

## 9. How to Submit

Online application form: [Link to form](#)

## 10. Timeframes

Applications are generally finalised within 8 to 12 weeks. Timeframes are dependent upon the submission of all necessary documentation prepared in accordance with the requirements of this Guide and the availability of appropriately experienced assessors for the conduct of the interview.

Once an application has been received by AACA, an AACA Assessment Team member will stay in regular contact with the Applicant through all stages of processing.

### Contacting AACA



Architects Accreditation Council  
of Australia (AACA)  
PO Box A2575  
Sydney South 1235  
Australia



(02) 8042 8930



[mail@aaca.org.au](mailto:mail@aaca.org.au)



[www.aaca.org.au](http://www.aaca.org.au)