



National Program of Assessment

Guide for Applicants

Candidates for the National Program of Assessment are:

- Individuals who have substantial skills and experience in the architectural services sector but do not have an Australian accredited qualification in architecture or overseas equivalent. Successful completion of the National Program of Assessment allows entry to the Architectural Practice Exam.



1. Introduction

The National Program of Assessment is a competency based assessment which provides a pathway to the Architectural Practice Examination for those who have substantial skills and experience in the architectural services sector but do not have an Australian accredited qualification in architecture or overseas equivalent.

The successful completion of the National Program of Assessment does not provide a qualification; its sole purpose is to grant access to the Architectural Practice Examination, completion of which is required before applying for registration as an architect in Australia.

Submissions in the National Program of Assessment are assessed against relevant components of the [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#). The relevant performance criteria are comparable to the technical abilities expected of a graduate from a five year full-time/10 semester (or part-time equivalent) program of study.

The National Program of Assessment is an 'assessment by project' process which is design focused and assesses the candidates' response to a design brief for a complex architectural project conceived by the AACA. Candidates communicate their ideas and design responses to that brief, and present an architectural project they have conceived and developed on their own. In their response to the AACA design brief candidates are also expected to elucidate on fundamental project co-ordination and initial practice management matters.

The National Program of Assessment comprises two stages:

- Stage 1 Eligibility
- Stage 2 Response to the design brief

2. Eligibility

a. Academic Requirement

Relevant post school study.

b. English Language Proficiency

If English is not the candidate's first language, or the applicant did not complete secondary school or tertiary education in English an overall score of 6.5 on the IELTS scale or equivalent is required. Alternatively, the AACA may accept a statement from a current employer in Australia that the candidate has sufficient written and spoken skills in English to operate to the standard required of an architect in Australia.

c. Relevant Work Experience

A minimum of seven years full-time work experience (or equivalent) in the last ten years in architectural, planning, building or other related fields; three of the seven years must be under the direction of an architect in an architect's office, at least two years of the three years must be in an architect's office in Australia.

d. Currently resident in Australia

3. Stage 1 Submission Requirements

Stage 1 applications must be submitted on the attached application form in electronic format with a maximum file size of 20mb.

- a. **Academic Requirement (evidence only of the highest level of education completed)**
- b. **English Language Proficiency (if required)**
- c. **Relevant Work Experience** – to be lodged via the Work Experience Spreadsheet, see [here](#).
- d. **A Summary Curriculum Vitae (CV)** – maximum of two pages.
- e. **Statement of Claim** – linking relevant work experience as expressed in the CV to key areas of architectural knowledge as described in the Knowledge Domains in the National Standard of Competency for Architects (maximum 1,500 words). Candidates should refer to four to six projects or aspects of your experience where your involvement required demonstration of the critical Knowledge Domains. For examples see Section 5. The sum total of your experience should address all Knowledge Domains.
- f. **Email contact details for two referees** who may be contacted by the AACA. One referee should be an architect registered in Australia.

4. Knowledge Domains in the National Standard of Competency

Regulatory Domain

Knowledge of the regulations, standards and codes, relevant to all aspects of architectural practice, project design and delivery.

Social and Ethical Domain

Knowledge of the social, ethical and cultural values relevant to architectural practice and the impacts on project users and broader communities.

Sustainable Environment Domain

Understanding of the responsibility of architects to minimise the impact on natural resources and design for longevity.

Disciplinary Domain

Knowledge of histories and theories relevant to architecture, practice, building and technologies.

Communication Domain

Knowledge of appropriate verbal, written and visual means to communicate relevant aspects of architecture.

5. Example Projects

a. Example Project 1

I was involved in xxxx project, an alterations and additions project to an existing federation home in xxxx. I was involved in the project from the beginning of the developed design stage, assisting in the early design and client meetings, and assisting in developing the construction documentation and administration of the contract.

The construction was complex due to xxxx. The construction details and method involved significant co-ordination between the architect, builder and structural engineers.

Finally, I was involved in many key design and selection decisions throughout the project, and was solely responsible for developing two dimension perspective images throughout the project to assist the clients to visualise the design.

Critical Knowledge Domains: Disciplinary, Regulatory and Communication.

b. Example Project 2

The client's brief was to construct a glass pavilion to the rear of the property on a site that falls steeply from front to back and is heavily planted with natural bush and native trees to house a master bedroom suite and living area along with some alterations to the existing dwelling. I was involved in the concept design stage as a participant working closely with my Practice Director and continued working on the project through to its successful development application approval. Due to the existing heritage listing we had to work closely with several specialist consultants such as heritage consultants, acoustic engineers and arboriculture consultants. I was involved in the project at detail design stage, tender and contract documentations and in the contract administration.

Critical Knowledge Domains: Disciplinary, Sustainable Environment and Regulatory.

c. Example Project 3

The brief of this project was for a new 36-storey multi-residential development with multi-story carpark and roof terraces. The site was located very near to the central business district and the project involved demolition prior to construction. The design involved the development of an integrated theme reflected through every aspect of the design; from the overall look of the development through to the design of the individual units. I worked on the project in the initial feasibility stage with the project team.

Critical Knowledge Domains: Social and Ethical and Regulatory.

If successful in stage 1, candidates are invited to participate in stage 2.

6. Stage 2 Overview

Applicants who accept the invitation to participate in Stage 2 –will be provided with the Project Brief. The timetable of critical dates is found [here](#).

- **Project Brief**

The brief takes the form of a complex architectural project.

A complex architectural project is demanding in its ordering and organisation of multiple occupancy and/or special purpose user requirements, in terms of people and vehicular circulation; complicated in its spatial articulation; difficult in the planning and co-ordination of construction systems, building materials, building services and fittings; challenging in site configuration and existing features, and requires the integration of cultural, social, environmental and technical issues.

A complex architectural project may require different construction typologies and demands the understanding of the consequences of the design decisions and informed judgement in the process of design.

The realisation of a complex architectural project requires an understanding of the significance of specialist input for the resolution of structural and technical design components and special purpose provisions if and where they occur; procurement options and an understanding of resources required for effective resourcing of project specialist input, and the collaboration of an experienced professional team for the preparation of project documentation and contract administration.

- **Guidance for Participants**

All participants will have the opportunity to submit questions to the National Program of Assessment Team in weeks 1 to 4 of the program. Questions will be aggregated and all aggregated questions and answers will be made available to all participants. Questions that relate to exercising judgement will not be considered.

The best Stage 2 submissions:

- *Show original creative thinking and demonstrates a design narrative.*
- *Use an understanding of the intent of relevant Performance Criteria and the program tasks to clearly demonstrate the architectural intentions in the brief.*
- *Demonstrates an architectural proposition and demonstrates the design thinking in the development of the design.*
- *Demonstrate the core principal of the design scheme throughout the evidence provided.*
- *Reflect an evolution of design thinking in response to the brief.*
- *Demonstrate how the designer has exercised architectural judgement in progressing an idea to an architectural solution.*
- *Demonstrates an understanding of construction, materiality and habitation.*
- *Clearly demonstrate the architectural/concepts/drivers for the final solution.*

- *Maximise the use of image/ illustrations/diagrams/ rather than relying on wordy responses.*
- *Articulate how working with consultants informs, influences and is integrated into the design rather than simply providing a list of consultants that may be used.*

7. Stage 2 Submission Requirements

Within twelve weeks of commencement of Stage 2 participants must submit in electronic format to the AACA a maximum of four A3 pages to demonstrate the initial conceptual design response to the design brief. This may include images, preliminary sketches, drawings, photographs of models etc. Scale must be included for reduced drawings.

The initial concept design response is required to be submitted early in the process as a method of tracking authorship of the design.

Feedback will not be provided after submission of the initial concept design response. The response forms part of the final submission and will be considered in the assessment of the final design response.

The final submission includes:

- a) Table of Contents** (including page numbers)
- b) Initial Concept Design Response** (forwarded electronically to the AACA within 12 weeks of the commencement of the program).
- c) Final Schematic Design Proposal:**
 - Overview of final schematic design response – maximum 1,000 words
 - 6-8 A1 drawings reduced to A3 (including scale) including preliminary sketches on conceptual/schematic design and final drawings. Applicants may demonstrate their final schematic design response in two dimensions, ie plans, elevations, sections, 3D modelling
 - This submission is to include initial sketches and diagrams selected from the initial concept design response submission. Only those sketches and diagrams that remain relevant should be included in the final submission.

All drawings should also be submitted electronically to npra@aaca.org.au

- d) Report** on application of the [performance criteria](#) required in the National Program of Assessment final submission.
- e) Appendix** (any other documents that demonstrate the evolution of design.)
- f) Statutory Declaration** – submitted with your final submission.

Presentation

One A4, portrait orientation report, in minimum 10 pt font, six final drawings reduced to A3 size (including scale) and bound into the A4 type-written document, with all pages consecutively numbered and containing the participant's unique Candidate number allocated by the AACA. All drawings in the final submission must be electronically submitted to npra@aaca.org.au at the time of submitting the hard copy of the submission.

Submitted materials are retained by the AACA during the assessment process and will be destroyed at the completion of the assessment. It is recommended that participants keep a copy of submitted material for their records.

8. Assessment of Submissions

A panel of Assessors is appointed by the National Program of Assessment Team to examine the participants' submissions. The Assessors report to the CEO of the AACA.

The Assessors recommend whether or not there is sufficient evidence of achievement of the required Performance Criteria.

Outcomes of the Assessment

The AACA will e-mail participants the result of the assessment within 2-3 weeks of the finalisation of the assessments.

a. Successful

Where a submission is successful, the AACA Assessment Notice is submitted to the relevant registration board in order to gain access to the Architectural Practice Examination, successful completion of which is required before applying for registration. If eligible, a successful applicant may apply for the [fast track assessment process for experienced practitioners](#).

b. Not-successful

If a submission is assessed as not successful, the areas in which a participant is deficient will be identified and forwarded to the applicant.

All documents sent to the AACA must be translated into English. If the documents are translated in a country other than Australia, the translator must be approved by the authorities in the country where the translation is made. The International Federation of Translators www.fit-ift.org provides a list of certified associations.

9. Translation of Documents

Translators in Australia are accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). See www.ausit.org for a list of members.

Scan both the original document and the translation and submit with your application.

All copies of documents sent to the AACA must be certified by an authorised person.

10. Document Quality

All electronic documents sent to the AACA must be in the form of colour high resolution (min 300 dpi).

11. Extensions

Applications for extension of time for lodgment of Final Submissions or an appeal will only be considered for reasons of ill health or other exceptional circumstances. Generally no extensions of time will be granted for Stage 1 - Eligibility submissions. Workplace commitments or travel (whether for professional or personal reasons) will not be accepted as valid reasons for extension. Applications for extension made on medical grounds must be supported by medical certification.

12. Previous Applicants

National Program of Assessment applicants who have been unsuccessful in two successive programs will be required to gain an additional three further years of relevant work experience under the supervision of an architect before re-applying. This requirement applies equally to applicants who have either been unsuccessful with their submission OR who have failed to submit without exemption being granted. Applicants who have officially withdrawn (within the prescribed withdrawal period), or who have been granted official deferral will be exempt.

13. Appeals

Unsuccessful participants may appeal to the AACA against the outcome of the National Program of Assessment. The appeal must be lodged in writing to the CEO of the AACA and received in the AACA office within 28 calendar days from the date on the e-mail notifying the result. An appeal fee will apply.

Causes external to the assessment of the Program will not normally constitute acceptable grounds for appeal. For example, insufficient time due to personal or other reasons is not considered a valid reason for appealing the outcome of the assessment.

Stage 1 – Eligibility \$1,100

Stage 2 – Response to the design brief \$3,600

14. Fees

All fees are GST free.

Applicants must complete the National Program of Assessment Stage 1 Eligibility Application Form and e-mail it, with the fee transaction receipt to npra@aca.org.au. AACA only accepts online credit card payments, by VISA or MASTERCARD.

Once an application has been submitted fees are **not refundable**.

Payment can be made through the [Forms and Fees page on the AACA website](#). All credit card transactions will be subject to a surcharge. Applicants will receive an email confirmation and payment receipt after payment is successfully made.

Payment details are protected during 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 at mai@aca.org.au or call us on (02) 8042 8930 or 61 2 8042 8930 (outside Australia).

15. Submissions

By courier or in person to:

Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA)
Suite 3, Level 5,
75 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Delivery must be between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

Contacting AACA



Architects Accreditation Council
of Australia (AACA)
PO Box A2575
Sydney South 1235
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www.aaca.org.au