# The National Standard of Competency for Architects (2015 edition)

*The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia has maintained Standards for the purpose of assessment processes for registration as an architect in Australia since 1990 in collaboration with the architectural sector and Australian state and territory architect registration boards.*

## The Standard

The National Standard of Competency for Architects identifies the primary activities and responsibilities that are fundamental to the general practice of architecture in Australia. It establishes the standard for assessment of architectural education and professional competency prior to registration as an architect in Australia.

## Why is it important?

Architects are skilled professionals at the centre of Australia's built environment industry, a $100 billion sector employing over a million people. The built environment industry is significant for both its size and for the critical national role played by the provision of dwellings, commercial spaces, public buildings and infrastructure. (AACA's Profile of the Profession in Australia 2017)

The Standard identifies for graduates, the profession and the public, the primary activities and responsibilities fundamental to the general practice of architecture.

## Scope of the Standard

The Standard is underpins across all programs of architectural education and assessment of professional competency prior to registration as an architect in Australia.

Having one Standard that underpins accreditation of architecture programs and competency assessment programs provides a clear roadmap for the development of competency on the path to registration as an architect.

The National Standard of Competency for Architects describes what is reasonably expected of a person who can demonstrate the standard of skill, care and diligence widely accepted in Australia as a competent professional Architectural practitioner. It sets out functions important to the profession of architecture, rather than simply measuring knowledge in isolation from skills, or time spent in formal education.

The Standard is not a form of assessment in itself but a framework to be used by those authorised to assess the professional standards of Architects but underpins all the processes that lead to the registration of architects in Australia including the —Architecture Program Accreditation Procedure in Australia and New Zealand Architecture, Overseas Qualifications Assessment, National Program of Recognition, the Architectural Practice Examination and Experienced Practitioner Assessment.

Each of the assessment processes listed above may require the demonstration of all or some of the part of the performance criteria described in the Standard. The context of the assessment processes is generally to the level of a Complex Project*, even though not all architectural projects follow this format, or even result in a built outcome.

> *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.

The Standard does not prioritise any unit, element or performance criteria: each has equal weight and all performance criteria must be demonstrated to meet the Standard as a whole.

The Standards facilitates flexible assessment programs on the pathway to registration as an architect. It has been organised in recognition that the path to acquiring competency or completing registration is not necessarily linear or singular; and that that aspects of architecture require learning in the realms of both university and practice, albeit in different ways and at different levels.

## Format

The Standard comprises 4 units of competency, 11 elements and 70 performance criteria relevant to the activities of professional architectural practice. It is published in an interactive format to allow individual mapping of programs against the performance criteria and also allows comparisons of the performance criteria required across programs at difference levels.

## Units of Competency

### Design

An activity involving iterative explorations and appraisals of a range of ideas and concepts, leading towards the development of coherent proposals for a project.

The design process extends from the evaluation of project viability to the conceptual and schematic resolution of a project in response to client, user and public requirements. The design process for a project is informed by appropriate environmental, social and ethical considerations of the architect. Although separately listed for convenience, the sequence of design phases indicated through the Elements of Competency and Performance Criteria is not necessarily linear but often comprises overlap, repetition and reiteration.

### Documentation

The process of resolving, detailing and communicating an architectural project through all project stages. The modes of documentation include modelling, drawings, specifications and schedules that can be used in the construction, contract management and handover of the project.

Documentation material must be consistent with design objectives and budgetary constraints, and must conform to relevant codes and industry standards. Where supplied by consultants, documentation compliance must be verified.

## Project Delivery

The proficient, timely and cost-effective completion of an architectural project through all design and construction phases. Project Delivery must take into account the range of contractual obligations carried by architects, clients, consultants and contractors.

Project Delivery involves the evaluation and implementation of procurement systems as well as appropriate contractual administration systems. The establishment and operation of project teams as well as formalising of project agreements (such as with client, team/s and contractor) is critical to competent project delivery.

## Practice Management

The holistic understanding and organisation of the business and profession of architecture in relation to delivering projects. It involves the knowledge and execution of the processes involved in providing architectural services; the knowledge and implementation of appropriate systems to establish and maintain an architectural practice; and the knowledge and enactment of the broad range of ethical and legal obligations required of a Professional Practitioner.

## Elements

The 9 elements represent a set of discrete aspects of architectural practice, all of which are integral to the conception, delivery and management of architectural projects as well as to the wider creative and professional endeavours of architects.

The naming and ordering of the elements does not presuppose a particular mode of practice, nor a particular sequence in which the aspects (in part or as a whole) occur.

### Design

1. Project Briefing

2. Pre-Design

3. Conceptual Design

4. Schematic Design Documentation

### Documentation

5. Detailed Design

6. Documentation Project Delivery

### Project Delivery

7. Procurement

8. Construction Stage Practice Management

### Practice Management

9. Practice Management

The 9 key elements of practice are supported by 70 performance criteria.

# Knowledge Domains

The Knowledge Domains are core areas of professional knowledge and understanding that underpin architectural practice. The Knowledge Domains are weighted as either ● **CRITICAL** or ◯ **NECESSARY** against each Performance Criteria.

## Regulatory Domain

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

## Social & 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 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.

# Level Required

Level Required defines the level of execution required of each Performance Criteria within a program.

The three levels depict the development of competency through the pathway to registration.

**K** ## Knowledge

Knowledge acquisition; able to demonstrate clear understanding, no requirement for application or demonstration of skill.

**S** ## Skills

Skills acquisition; able to demonstrate skill, no requirement for application in practice.

**A** ## Application

Application of Knowledge and Skills in architectural practice; able to demonstrate a clear understanding and demonstrate where it has been applied in architectural practice or practice scenario.

# National Standard of Competency for Architects

**The National Standard of Competency for Architects establishes the standard for architectural education and assessment of professional competency prior to registration as an architect in Australia.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Architecture Accreditation Procedure in Australia (ANZAPAP)** | TheAACA maintains the Australia New Zealand Architecture Program Accreditation Procedure (ANZAPAP) on behalf of the architects registration boards. Theprocedure involves a review of architecture schools at least every 5 years by an expert panel which makes a recommendation to the relevant architect registration board responsible for making the decision whether to accredit the programme. |
| **Overseas Qualifications Assessment (OQA)** | The Overseas Qualifications Assessment (OQA) is a two-stage process which assesses overseas academic qualifications for migration and registration purposes. Overseas academic qualifications in architecture must be assessed to determine comparability with a currently accredited Australian qualification in architecture before a candidate can undertake the Architectural Practice Examination leading to registration. |
| **National Program of Assessment (NPRA)** | The National Program of Assessment (NPRA) 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 profession but do not have an accredited qualification in architecture or overseas equivalent. |
| **Architectural Practice Examination (APE)** | The Architectural Practice Examination (APE) is a nationally consistent competency-based assessment. It comprises three parts - completion of a logbook and Statement of Practical Experience, a written paper and an interview with architect practitioners. Candidates who have satisfactorily met the requirements of all three parts of the APE may apply for registration to the Architects Registration Board in any state or territory in Australia.<br><br>1 Part 1 'Electronic Log Book' minimum requirements and Statement of Practical Experience<br>2 Part 2 National Exam Paper (NEP) Elements and PC's for written exam<br>3 Part 3 Oral Interview Elements andf PC's required |
| **Experienced Practitioner Assessment (OAA)** | The Experienced Architect Assessment Program (OAA) provides fast-track to registration in Australia for overseas and locally experienced architects  who have the appropriate skills and knowledge and are not eligible for registration under existing mutual recognition agreements. Successful completion of this program allows applicants to bypass the Architectural Practice Examination and apply directly for registration as an architect with their State or Territory Architects Registration Board. |

(R) Regulatory
(S) Social & Ethical
(E) Environmentally Sustainable
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(●) Critical Domain
(◐) Necessary Domain

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All required APE competencies are at the (A) level

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**Program level required**

**R** **S** **E** **D** **C**

## 1. Design: Project briefing

| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1** Preparation & endorsement of an agreement between client and Architect. This agreement will clearly communicate terms, services to be provided, and fees appropriate for the scale and type of project. | K | K | S | 2 3 | A |
| **1.2** Establishment, analysis and evaluation of client project requirements and objectives. | S | S | A | 1 3 | A |
| **1.3** Assessment of project budget and timeframe against project requirements and objectives. | | | | 3 | A |
| **1.4** Identification of factors that may impact on client project requirements and objectives. | S | S | A | 1 2 3 | |
| **1.5** Knowledge of different procurement processes available and evaluation of the impact these have on the project. | K | K | S | 2 3 | A |
| **1.6** Selection and presentation to clients and relevant stakeholders of procurement method for the project. | | | | 2 3 | |
| **1.7** Preparation of project brief for approval by client and relevant stakeholders. | S | S | A | 2 3 | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**R S E D C**

## 2. Design: Pre-Design

| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2.1** Identification, analysis and integration of information relevant to siting of project. | A | A | A | 1 3 | ○ |
| **2.2** Application of principles controlling planning, development and design for the project site. | A | A | A | 1 3 | A |
| **2.3** Evaluation of factors influencing and impacting on project cost. | K | K | S | 3 | A |
| **2.4** Analysis of project brief in relation to clients objective budget and timeframe. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 3 | ○ |
| **2.5** Attainment of approval from client of project budget and timeframe. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 2 3 | A |
| **2.6** Preparation and analysis of project development options in response to project brief. | ○ | ○ | A | 3 | ○ |

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**R S E D C**

## 3. Design: Conceptual Design

| Competency | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3.1** Design response integrates the objectives of brief, user intent and built purpose. | S | S | A | 3 | ○ |
| **3.2** Application of creative imagination, aesthetic judgement and critical evaluation in formulating design options. | A | S | A | | ○ |
| **3.3** Design response incorporates assessment of the physical location and relevant wider regional, contextual and environmental issues. | A | A | A | | ○ |
| **3.4** Design response incorporates assessment of relevant legislation, codes and industry standards. | S | S | A | 1 2 3 | A |
| **3.5** Exploration and application of ordering, sequencing and modelling of three-dimensional form and spatial content. | A | S | A | | ○ |
| **3.6** Assessment of the economic impact on the project of design strategies and options. | K | K | S | 3 | ○ |
| **3.7** Assessment and integration of construction systems and materials consistent with project brief. | S | S | A | 2 3 | ○ |
| **3.8** Application of manual and digital graphic techniques and modelling to describe three-dimensional form and spatial relationships. | A | S | A | | ○ |

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## 4. Design: Schematic Design

| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.1** Evaluation of design options in relation to project requirements. | S | S | A | 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.2** Evaluation of design options against values of physical, environmental and cultural contexts. | A | K | A | 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.3** Application of creative imagination aesthetic judgement to produce coherent design | A | A | A | | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.4** Inclusion of expertise of relevant specialists and consultants in developing the project design. | K | K | S | 2 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.5** Investigation and integration of appropriate structural, construction, service and transport systems in the project design. | A | A | A | 2 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.6** Investigation and integration of appropriate material selection for the project design. | A | A | A | 2 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.7** Coordination and integration of appropriate environmental systems, including for thermal comfort, lighting and acoustics. | A | A | A | 2 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● **4.8** Analysis of schematic design in regard to cost planning and timeframe to comply with client and project requirements. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 3 | A |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
| ● ● ● ● ● | ○ | ○ | **A** | **2** **3** | **A** |

**4.9 Obtain approval for the design from client and and/or relevant stakeholders.**

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## Program level required

**R  S  E  D  C**

# 5. Documentation: Detailed Design

| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.1 Application of creative imagination and aesthetic judgement in producing a resolved project design in regard to site planning, physical composition and spatial planning as appropriate to the project brief. | A | A | A | | ○ |
| 5.2 Resolution of project design addressing all building occupancy and functional aspects including spatial requirements and relationships and circulation aspects. | A | A | A | 3 | ○ |
| 5.3 Evaluation and integration of regulatory requirements. | S | A | A | 1 2 3 | ○ |
| 5.4 Integration of structural and construction systems in resolved project design. | ○ | ○ | A | 2 3 | ○ |
| 5.5 Integration of materials and components based upon an understanding of their physical properties. | S | S | A | 2 3 | ○ |
| 5.6 Integration of relevant technical services, environmental and transportation systems. | ○ | ○ | A | 2 3 | ○ |
| 5.7 Resolution of project design to address budget and time constraints. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 3 | A |
| 5.8 Presentation of detailed design to facilitate relevant client and stakeholder approvals. | ○ | ○ | A | 3 | ○ |

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**Program level required**

(R) (S) (E) (D) (C)

## 6. Documentation: Documentation

| Competency | Domains | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6.1 Identification and adoption of a strategy, program and process of documentation integrated through all project stages to enable project delivery. | R○ S○ E○ D● C● | | | S | 1 3 | |
| 6.2 Continuing coordination and integration of information and project material from relevant consultants, specialists and suppliers. | R● S● E● D○ C○ | K | K | S | 1 2 3 | |
| 6.3 Incorporation of the project requirements and objectives in accordance with Project Brief and approved Detailed Design. | R○ S● E● D● C○ | | | | 1 3 | A |
| 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. | R● S○ E○ D● C● | S | S | | 1 3 | |
| 6.5 Nomination of quality and performance standards with regard to selected materials, finishes, fittings components and systems. | R● S○ E● D○ C○ | K | K | | 2 3 | |
| 6.6 Identification and description within the project documentation of the type and scope of separate project trades and sub-contractors as required. | R○ S○ E○ D● C● | | | | 2 3 | |
| 6.7 Establishment of quality assurance systems to ensure consistency and completeness of project documentation in accordance with the requirement fo the project brief, project timeframe and project budget. | R○ S○ E○ D● C○ | | | | 3 | A |

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| | Program level required | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
| ● ● ● ● ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | **1** **2** **3** | ○ |

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

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Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA)          January 2018

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |

**R** **S** **E** **D** **C**

## 7. Project Delivery: Procurement

| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **7.1 Identification of available procurement methods and assessment of relevance and application to the project.** | K | K | | 1 3 | A |
| **7.2 Selection of procurement method incorporates assessment of the impact on all phases of project including design, documentation and project delivery.** | | | | 3 | A |
| **7.3 Selection of procurement method incorporates assessment of the impact on contractual arrangements between all project stakeholders.** | | | | 2 3 | A |
| **7.4 Selection of procurement method incorporates assessment of the impact on selection, contracting and scope of work of consultants and specialist service providers.** | | | | 3 | A |
| **7.5 Preparation of report and recommendations to enable client to make approval of procurement method and all associated contracts.** | | | | 2 3 | |
| **7.6 Knowledge and application of all administration and principles for the selected procurement method and associated contracts.** | | | | 2 3 | A |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**R S E D C**

# 8. Project Delivery: Construction Stage

| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● ● ◐ ● ◐ — **8.1** Selection process for appropriately qualified contractors is in accordance with procurement method and project contract. | K | K | ○ | 2 3 | A |
| ● ● ◐ ● ● — **8.2** Recommendation regarding contractor selection and specifics of project contract are made to the client for their approval. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 2 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ◐ ● ◐ — **8.3** Identification and application of the process and administration systems needed to fulfil all obligations under project contract. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 1 2 3 | A |
| ◐ ◐ ◐ ● ◐ — **8.4** Construction progress and quality is systematically reviewed and monitored as required under the contract provisions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 1 2 | A |
| ● ● ◐ ● ● — **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. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 1 2 3 | A |
| ◐ ◐ ● ◐ ● — **8.6** Monitoring project requirements and objectives as described in project documents are met. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 2 3 | ○ |
| ◐ ◐ ◐ ● ◐ — **8.7** Identification and application of appropriate and consistent systems for record keeping and maintenance of document revisions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 2 3 | A |

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| | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● ● ● ● ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | ②③ | Ⓐ |
| **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.** | | | | | |
| ● ● ● ● ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | ②③ | ○ |
| **8.9 Undertake post occupancy evaluation if required under the scope of the project agreement.** | | | | | |

Ⓡ Regulatory
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Ⓒ Communication

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● Necessary Domain

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**R** **S** **E** **D** **C**

## 9. Practice Management

| | | ANZAPAP | OQA | NPRA | APE | OAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● ● ● ● ● | **9.1** Knowledge and implementation of appropriate practice model to ensure efficient, effective and ethical professional service. | K | K | ○ | 3 | A |
| ● ● ● ● ● | **9.2** Knowledge and application of practice resources required to ensure efficient and effective professional service. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● | **9.3** Identification and application of practice systems and quality management systems to facilitate efficient and timely delivery of architectural services in accordance with project objectives. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● | **9.4** Establishment of project team and practice structures required to deliver the professional services in a timely manner. | ○ | ○ | ○ | 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● | **9.5** Knowledge of the legal and ethical obligations relating to copyright and intellectual property requirements. | K | K | ○ | 2 3 | ○ |
| ● ● ● ● ● | **9.6** Knowledge and application of professional ethics and ethical practices in respect to practice management and provision of professional service. | K | K | ○ | 2 3 | A |
| ● ● ● ● ● | **9.7** Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements and obligations in regard to architectural practice, practice management and registration as an architect. | K | K | ○ | 2 3 | A |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **9.8 Clear and consistent communication with client and relevant stakeholders throughout project.** | K | K | A | 3 | |
| **9.9 Provision of independent and objective advice through all phases of professional practice.** | | | | 2 3 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **R** Regulatory | | | **1** APE Logbook |
| **S** Social & Ethical | | | **2** APE National Exam Paper |
| **E** Environmentally Sustainable | ⬤ Critical Domain | **K** Knowledge acquisition | **3** APE Interview |
| **D** Disciplinary | | **S** Skills acquisition | All required APE competencies are at the **A** level |
| **C** Communication | ⬤ Necessary Domain | **A** Application of Knowledge & Skills in architectural practice | |