



# Architectural Practice Examination

## Procedure for Candidates

### **Preparation for the Architectural Practice Examination**

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

**[National Standard of Competency for Architects \(NSCA\)](#)**

The NSCA provides the assessment criteria for the Architectural Practice Examination

**[National Standard of Competency for Architects Procedure for Candidates Booklet](#)**

**[Logbook of Experience in Architectural Practice](#)**

Log Sheets

**[Sample National Examination Paper Scenario](#)**

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 national competency based assessment. The Architectural Practice Examination comprises three parts:

- Part 1: completion of a Logbook and Statement of Practical Experience;
- Part 2: the National Examination Paper; and
- Part 3: 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](#) 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.

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

The [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) applies to:

- Australian and New Zealand architecture program accreditation,
- [Overseas Qualifications Assessment](#),
- [National Program of Assessment](#),
- [Architectural Practice Examination](#) and
- [Experienced Practitioner Assessment](#).

The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) has maintained the [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) (in its various iterations) since 1990, in collaboration with the architectural profession and each individual state and territory architects registration boards.

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

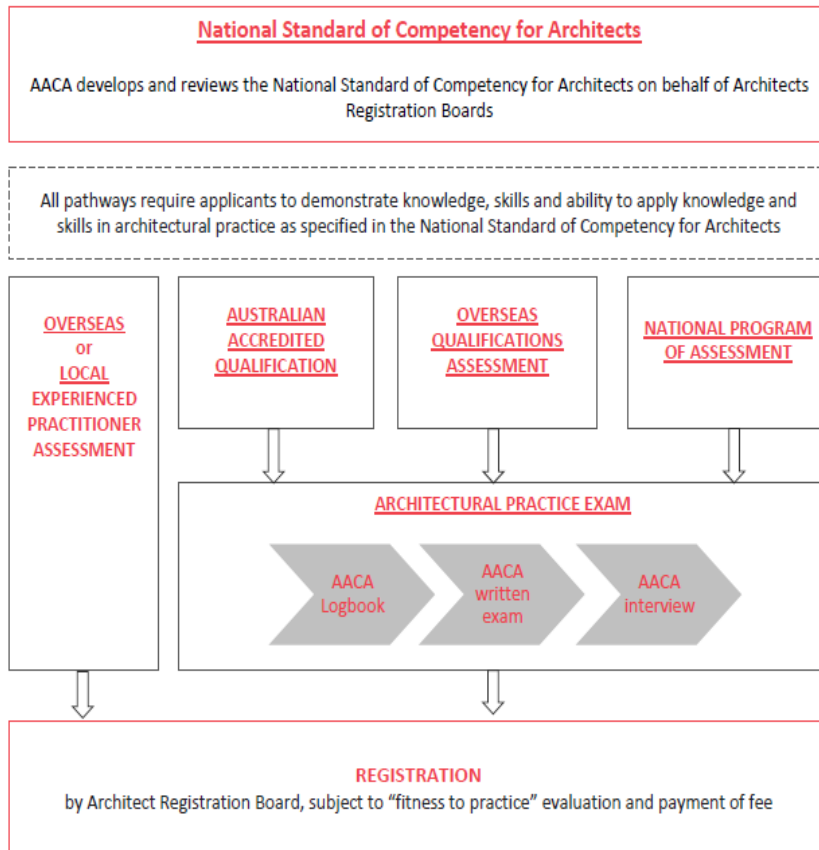
### 2.1 Definition of a Complex Project

Typically a project of medium scale or larger, that requires the application of skills 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.

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

It is not a requirement that all 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: Logbook and Statement of Practical Experience

#### 4.1.1 Introduction

The objective of Part 1 (submission of Logbook and Statement of Practical Experience) is to determine eligibility to the [National Examination Paper](#).

#### 4.1.2 Eligibility

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

- a. an approved qualification/entry pathway,
- b. undertaken a period of practical experience recorded in the [AACA Logbook](#), and
- c. a completed a Statement of Practical Experience.

Approved qualification/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](#).

#### 4.1.3 Application

Application for the Architectural Practice Examination is made to the relevant state or territory [architects registration board](#). Application requirements include:

- Completed application form (downloadable from the state or territory architects registration board website),
- Completed [logbook](#) (downloadable from the AACA website),
- Statement of Practical Experience with summary CV,
- Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of all the documentation submitted, and
- Evidence of approved qualification/entry pathway.

Dates for the submission of log books are set by the [state or territory architects registration board](#). The National Examination Paper dates are set by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia. Submission dates are available on both your local Board's site and on the [AACA website](#).

#### 4.1.4 Practical Experience Requirements

All candidates must have:

- a minimum of 3,300 hours of practical experience that range over all required 15 Performance Criteria – *refer to 4.1.6*;
- a minimum of two years' practical experience\*;
- a Statement of Practical Experience.

\* Practical experience may be gained as an employee of an architectural firm under the supervision of an architect, or as an employee in a building design firm, or an employee in a firm in an allied field in the construction industry, or in relevant government agencies, or gained independently in a self-employed capacity.

Candidates who hold a qualification listed on the [AACA Accredited Architecture Qualifications](#) must have:

- a minimum of 12 months logged experience subsequent to successfully completing this qualification in architecture, and
- 12 months of logged experience in Australia.

Candidates whose entry pathway is an AACA certified overseas qualification may commence logging the 12 months of experience in Australia from the date of arrival in Australia. However, where a candidate is required to undertake further education he or she may only begin logging Australian experience from the date of successful completion of further study.

Successful completion of the AACA National Program of Recognition provides entry to the Architectural Practice Examination at the next available session.

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. *Refer to 4.1.7.*

#### 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 in the practice of architecture required for the Architectural Practice Examination.

The Practical Experience must have been obtained during the previous ten years and in the categories identified in the Logbook.

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 Prescribed Performance Criteria

Candidates are required to have practical experience in the practice of architecture 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 a decision-maker on a project.
- **Participant** - experience gained as an active team member carrying out project related work under the instruction or supervision of an architect or other of a responsible person.
- **Observer** - experience gained by careful observation of project procedures and practices carried out by others.

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 - 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 1:** that these are the ONLY prescribed Performance Criteria in which Observer level experience is accepted.

**Note 2:** 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.

#### 4.1.8 Statement of Practical Experience

The objectives of the Statement of Practical Experience are to provide:

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

The Statement of Practical Experience word limitations:

- 2000 words (maximum) if all experience is logged under the supervision of an architect, or
- 3000 words (maximum) if some or all logged experience is not under the supervision of an architect.

The Statement should be well considered, precisely expressed, properly composed 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. The examples used will provide a platform for Assessors to explore the nature and level of experience in the Part 3, Examination by Interview.

The Statement should begin with a summary CV (maximum one page – exclusive of the word limit) to give 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 particulars including typology and address details should 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 may be included in the summary CV.

The Statement must be presented in chronological order of experience.

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 Examination 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 relevant performance criteria in the [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#). Candidates must pass the National Examination Paper as a condition of admission to Part 3, Examination by Interview.

### 4.2.2 The Process

The National Examination Paper is a 75 minute 'closed book' **computer based** scenario style paper. The National Examination Paper is conducted in each state and territory of Australia by the responsible architect registration board in accordance with nationally consistent procedures and a national timetable. The National Examination Paper will be held in a test centre nominated by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia.

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 for each question.

#### **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 medical 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, you must lodge your application along with supporting documentation by **the Part 1 Submission deadline** as per the advertised date on your Board's website.

### 4.2.3 Outcome

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 the result (Pass or Fail) by the responsible architect registration board, generally within three weeks of sitting the National Examination Paper. All candidates are provided with feedback on their results.

Candidates results and feedback will also be provided to APE Part 3 Assessors.

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 candidates must provide a Logbook, a Statement of Practical Experience that satisfy the eligibility criteria and a Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of all information in the documentation submitted.

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

## 4.3 Architectural Practice Examination 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 can demonstrate and communicate adequate practical application 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). Part 3 traverses the majority of the Performance Criteria identified in the [Architectural Practice Examination matrix](#). The interview will seek to confirm the experience claimed by the Candidate, and consider the Candidate's response to practice situations that may be outside the Candidate's direct professional 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 their ability to deal with real-life situations in a mature professional manner.

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

The Examination by Interview 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 types and they should be able to demonstrate competence in construction 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 the 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, with 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 new Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of the documentation submitted.

## 4.4 Architectural Practice Examination 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.

## Copyright

© Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) 2018. Copyright of this material is owned by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia.

You may download, display, print and reproduce this material in whole or part, subject to acknowledgement of the source, for your personal, non-commercial use or use within your organisation. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), all other rights are reserved.

Except as permitted above you must not copy, adapt, publish, distribute or commercialise this material without the permission of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia.

Requests for further authorisation should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer, Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, e-mail address: [mail@aaca.org.au](mailto:mail@aaca.org.au).

For further information please refer to the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) at: [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/ca1968133](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/ca1968133).

### Contacting AACA



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



+612 8042 8930



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



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