



2020 Review of the National Standard of Competency for Architects

Issues Paper

1 June 2020

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Outline the methodology and consultation framework for the project
- Provide the initial position from the NSCA Review Expert Reference Group on the threshold matters to be considered in the review of the NSCA
- Provide the basis for stakeholders to respond to the views and recommendations proposed in the paper prior to the next stage of the review.

The issues outlined in this Paper are derived from results from the survey administered in early 2020, scan of key issues facing the profession and industry, comparison of national and international professional benchmarks in architecture and other professions and considerations by the Expert Reference Group.

Terms of Reference for the 2020 Review of the NSCA

The NSCA are reviewed approximately every five years. The terms of reference of the current review are the extent to which the NSCA:

- broadly reflects the role of an architect across the diversity of modes of practice
- represents the needs of regulators and reflects current and emerging risks across the profession as a whole
- is fit for purpose as the benchmark for AACCA assessment programs.

The Expert Reference Group

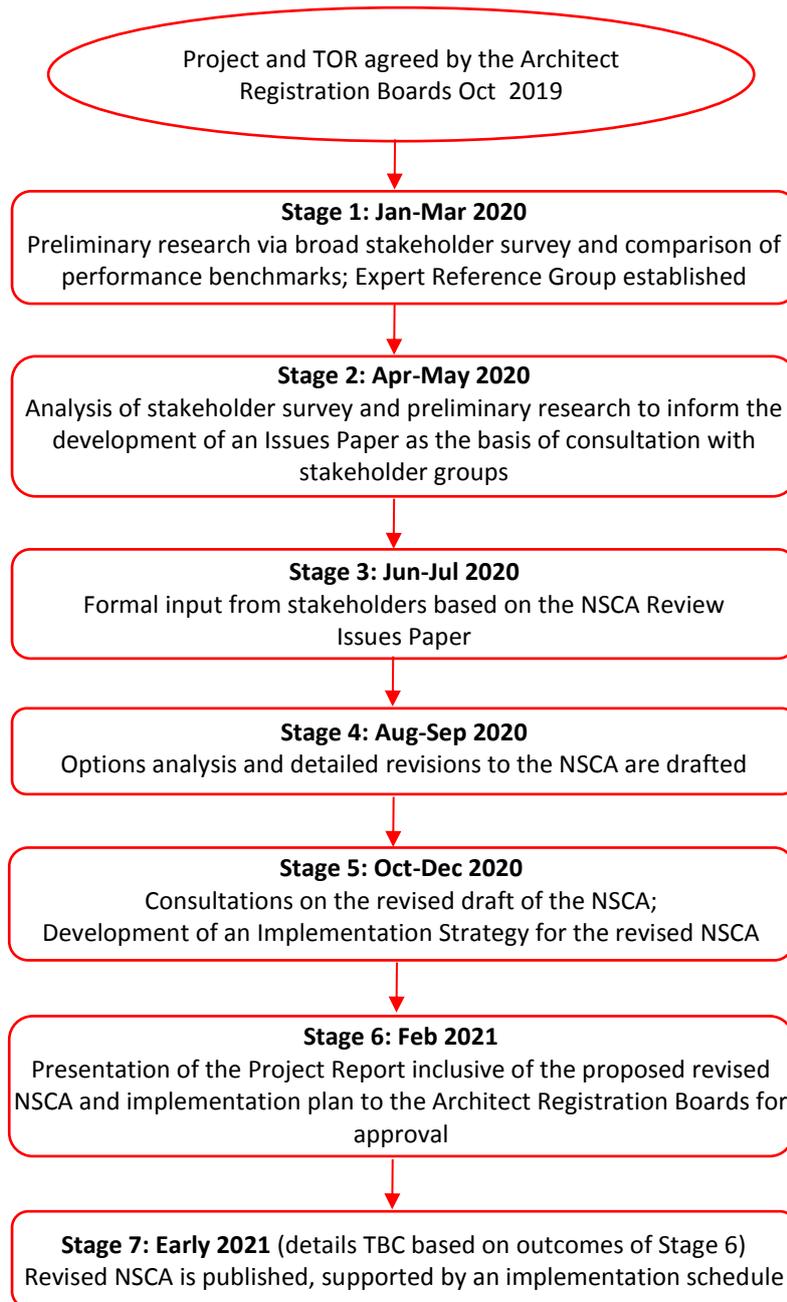
The Expert Reference Group established to guide the Review includes:

- Dr Tanja Glusac (WA) – Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia Nominee
- Ms Charmaine Kai (QLD) – Association of Consulting Architects Australia Nominee
- Mr Bill Krotiris (VIC) – nominated by the Architect Registration Boards as having current practice experience
- Dr Kirsten Orr (NSW) – nominated by the Registrars of the Architect Registration Boards as having experience with regulation
- Emeritus Professor Alec Tzannes AM (NSW) – Australian Institute of Architects Nominee.

Stages of the Review

Diagram 1 illustrates the broad stages and timings for the review. Given the evolving Coronavirus COVID-19 situation, project timelines are being adjusted as required, and will continue to be reviewed throughout 2020.

Diagram 1: Stages of the 2020 NSCA Review



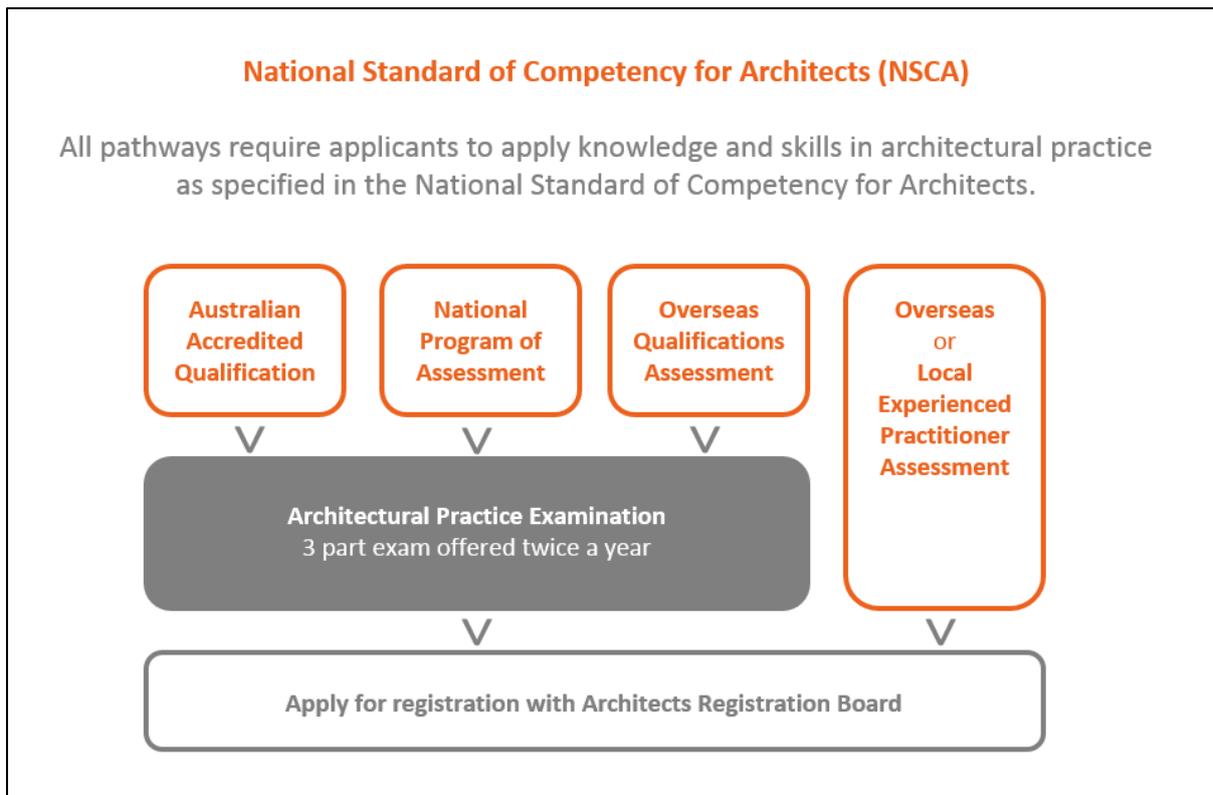
Background to the NSCA

The National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA) 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.

The NSCA 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 NSCA is not itself a form of assessment but a framework to be used by those authorised to assess the professional standards of Architects.

The NSCA underpins accreditation of professional education and assessment of professional competency prior to applying for registration, providing a clear roadmap for the development of competency on the path to registration as an architect in Australia. This is depicted in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: Pathways to registration as an architect in Australia



Historical perspective

Kirsten Orr's paper published in 2015, *Institutionalising National Standards: [A History of the Incorporation of the AACCA and the NSCA](#)*, provides excellent background to the introduction of the National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA) in 1993.

Competency based education across industries resulted from national reforms in the vocational education sector in the 1980's. The 1980's and 1990's saw a push towards the development of competency standards for Australian professions generally, part of the Australian Government's microeconomic reform strategy for a multicultural Australia.

The intent of introducing national competency standards for the Australian professions was that they would increase competition, increase mobility by removing state and territory barriers, open occupations to skilled migrants, promote Australian participation in international trade in services, and protect the public and the professions by maintaining professional standards. (NACSR, *Migrant Skills Reform Strategy Progress Report June 1991*, 41 cited by Kirsten Orr, 2015).

The NSCA in its initial form included more than 150 Performance Criteria organised into sub-groups (Elements) under four Units of Competency – *Design, Documentation, Project Management* and *Practice Management* – its primary purpose being a benchmark for the Architectural Practice Examination introduced in the early 1990's. Over time the NSCA has evolved its authority and is now the benchmark for accreditation of architecture programs and for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) post registration as an architect.

Format of the 2015 edition of the NSCA

The current NSCA comprises four Units of Competency, 9 Elements and 70 Performance Criteria relevant to the activities of professional architectural practice. Five Knowledge Domains underpin the entire framework, providing the background knowledge required to engage in architectural practice.

The NSCA is published in an [interactive format](#) to allow individual mapping of programs against the Performance Criteria and to also allow comparison of the Performance Criteria required across programs at different levels. One of the key changes incorporated in the last review in 2014/2015 was the removal of the 'statement of context' information, and the introduction of the five 'knowledge domains'.

See **Enclosure 1** for an overview of the *current 2015 edition of the NSCA*.

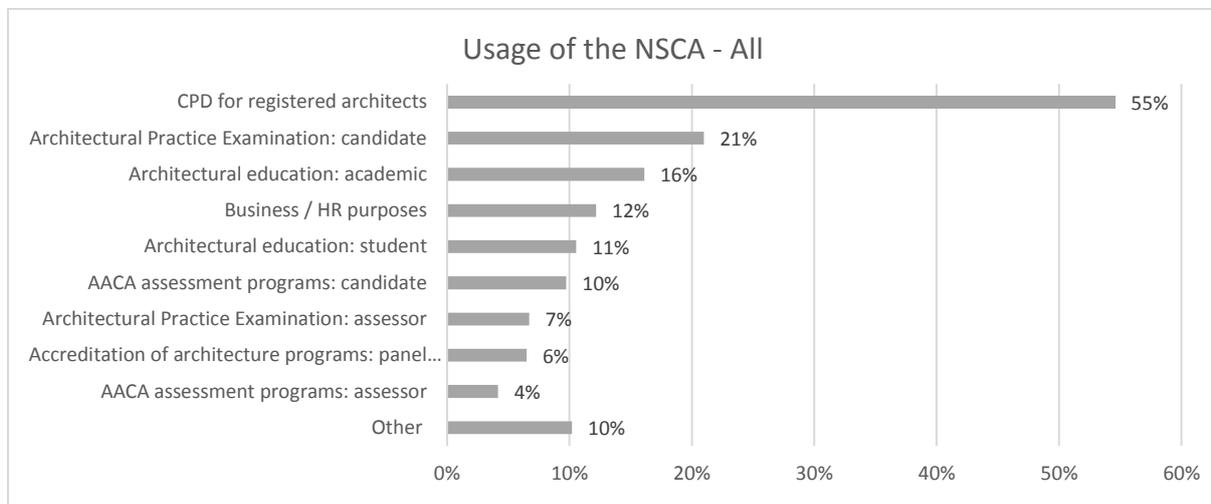
A diagrammatic representation of the current 2015 framework is included at **Enclosure 2**. This overview and diagrammatic representation is provided to give a clear reference for the issues for consideration, recommendations for change and proposed model for reframing of the NSCA as outlined in the Issues Paper.

NSCA Review: Survey responses

A brief survey was administered by the AACAA in February 2020 to seek views from across the profession about the use of the NSCA, currency of the NSCA, areas thought to require amendment, and perceived gaps. 963 participants from eight states/territories provided a response.

The survey confirmed that the NSCA is used for a range of purposes across architecture, with most respondents indicating that they had used the NSCA for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) purposes, understandable given the largest group of respondents were practising architects. See Chart 1 for survey responses. Respondents were able to indicate more than one use of the NSCA.

Chart 1. Usage of the NSCA

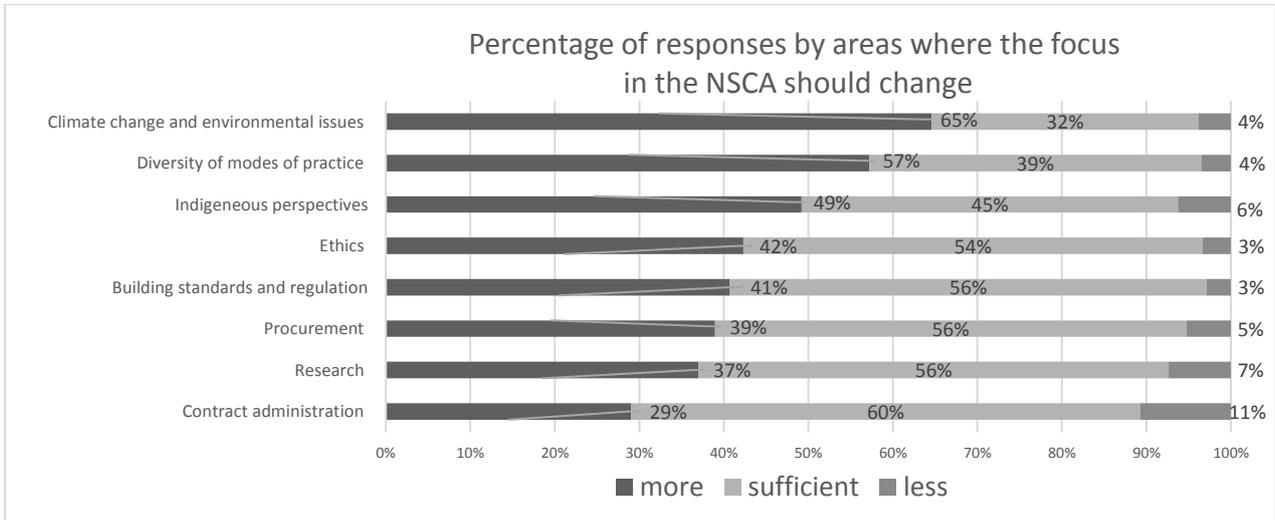


Respondents were asked to indicate where the focus of the NSCA should change, with the options to indicate “less”, “sufficient” or “more” focus on eight specified areas. The responses from this section of the survey are provided at Chart 2 and are considered to broadly reflect the views across the profession.

An overview of the Survey responses can be read [here](#).

As part of the analysis of the survey results, the eight focus areas in the survey (see Chart 2) identified as requiring change were mapped to the NSCA wherever there were explicit references to any of the focus areas. This mapping can be viewed [here](#).

Chart 2. Responses by areas indicating where the focus of the NSCA should change



Issues for Consideration

The Expert Reference Group considered an environmental scan of key issues in the architectural profession in Australia and industry more broadly, results from a survey of the profession and comparisons of benchmark standards across architecture internationally, and other professions within Australia.

Five areas have emerged from the considerations of the Expert Reference Group as the threshold matters to be considered in the review of the NSCA.

1. Changes in the context of practice

Technological, material, environmental, educational and political contexts are constantly evolving and therefore impacting on the competencies required of architects.

The current NSCA is structured around traditional project delivery. It is broadly reflective of current practice until schematic design, however, from that point onwards there are a myriad of ways in which a project can be delivered often with shifting emphasis on the balance of architectural services.

Modes of employment have also changed rapidly over the last five years. Many graduates working on short-term contracts or in casual positions face challenges in gaining appropriate work experience in order to develop the competency profile required at the point of registration as an architect.

There are changing expectations about standards and regulation of those professionals who work in the built environment. Across Australia and internationally there are calls for reform of building regulations, greater risk management and clearer responsibilities for everyone involved at every stage of the design, documentation and project delivery of complex projects¹. The Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance market has become onerous for construction professionals with increased claims activity and several large settlements and court judgments. The knowledge basis for an architect to navigate risk from a contractual basis continues to grow as part of the many and varied skills required of a competent practicing architect. These changing expectations about standards and regulation of professionals working in the construction industry are driving legislative change in State and Territory Governments.

Environmental considerations and climate change are becoming increasingly urgent. Architecture, construction and climate change are strongly interrelated. While the Environmentally Sustainable Knowledge Domain in the current NSCA underpins all Performance Criteria there is a strong feeling in the profession that the current edition of the NSCA does not explicitly incorporate action required by architects to respond to challenges associated with climate change.

¹ The AACCA definition of a complex project that is used across all AACCA assessment programs is: 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.

There are increasing calls for the formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as traditional owners of the land, and the need for indigenous design perspectives to be integrated into practice. There is no explicit reference to these matters in the current NSCA. See further comment on this at Issue 4.

2. Use of the NSCA across competency contexts

The NSCA currently describes architectural services in functional terms. In effect, it represents the basis of the social contract between the architect registration boards (whose primary responsibility is consumer protection) and society.

The NSCA is the benchmark for assessment in programs across architectural education, assessment for registration purposes, and post registration as the benchmark for CPD for architects in Australia. There is poor linkage to industry and professional regulatory frameworks. For example, the NSCA does not closely align with components of Codes of Conduct included in Architects Acts around the country.

The NSCA does not capture all aspects of what it is to be an architect, nor does the NSCA attempt to define the highest level of knowledge and skills exhibited by expert practitioners in a diverse range of practices. This is not in itself a problem as the NSCA was never intended to do so. The NSCA should provide clarity as a reference document to set community expectations of a competent practicing architect.

There is significant value in having one standard of competency for architects in Australia as it provides flexibility and facilitates the development of alternative pathways to registration as an architect. However, the current edition of NSCA could better reflect the development of competency across the professional life of an architect; in particular the transition from professional learning to practising as an architect.

The evolving uses of the NSCA as a benchmark across competency contexts drives the need to identify a more effective way to conceive the NSCA in order to facilitate the effective application of performance criteria across a range of competency contexts.

3. Format and Language

The current NSCA assumes the architect in a traditional role where the architect has direct communication with the client throughout all phases of professional services and where limited additional consultants are engaged for a building project.

The format and language of the current NSCA does not encompass how an architect's practice and risk profile changes across project programs, scale and procurement methods, nor does it embrace new roles undertaken by architects in the digital age.

Professional Services terminology used to describe architectural services may have different meanings at various stages of a design project and it is common in customised agreements for the architect's services to include terms and/or requirements without consistent linkages to the current NSCA.

The introduction of the Knowledge Domains in the last review of the NSCA was an attempt to incorporate the underpinning professional knowledge that cuts across all the Performance Criteria. However, while the Knowledge Domains are intended to be fundamental to the standards framework, they are poorly understood and only formally used in two of the five AACAC assessment programs (as the basis of assessment rubrics in the National Program of Assessment and in the Architectural Practice Examination).

4. Linear format of the NSCA

The current format of the NSCA follows the traditional stages of an architectural project. Linearity is inherent in the iterative delivery of services as described in the NSCA. Each 'step' increases the detail or adds to the activity of the previous tasks. Accordingly, it is inevitable that repetition to some extent will occur because many tasks are necessarily performed in a number of 'project phases'; for example, obtaining approvals from various parties at different phases of a project.

Architectural project phases do not neatly fit into this linear format of the current edition of the NSCA and do not reflect the emerging practice of architecture in the digital age.

The challenge is to identify what are the essential competency requirements that are meaningful across the practice contexts and practice types for architects today.

5. Inadequate ethical perspectives to the NSCA

The results of the survey confirm the inadequacy of the current NSCA to reflect explicitly the professional and ethical responsibilities of architects to clients and to society more broadly.

There are expectations across the profession that matters such as indigenous recognition and climate change are both ethical matters for architects and impact directly on architects' professional performance. Therefore, the functional components of these matters should be specifically reflected in the NSCA, such as through either performance criteria or the knowledge domains (or their revised equivalent).

Recommendations for Change

The Expert Working Group agrees that the essential components of the current NSCA are sound but recognises the need to reframe the NSCA so that it:

- reflects the knowledge, skills and competencies required of architects now and into the immediate future;
- reframes architectural services away from the traditional linear framework of services described in accordance with traditional modes of delivering architectural projects to one with a clearer focus on the architects' design responsibilities to clients and society;
- is acknowledged as the basis for a proportionate, effective regulatory model which ensures that only competent architects are eligible to join and remain on the Architect Registers in order to provide assurance and confidence to the public about the expected professional standard of architects in Australia;
- is flexible enough to reflect core competencies applied across varied competency profiles; and
- reflects an explicit ethical focus - particularly around societal obligations of architects with respect to climate change and acknowledgement of the of integrating indigenous perspectives in the design process, and cultural diversity more broadly.

The recommendations outlined below aim to address the issues noted in the previous section of the Paper. These Recommendations will form the basis of follow-on work in Stage 4 of the Review, and proposed revisions to the current NSCA.

Recommendation 1. Conceive the NSCA as a Framework of Professional Competency viewed through specified Professional Capabilities²: Professionalism in Practice (incorporating the content areas of the existing Disciplinary and Regulatory Knowledge Domains), Social and Ethical Capabilities in Architectural Practice, Sustainable Environments in Architectural Design, and Communication in Design.

Recommendation 2. Retain four units of competency with a refocus on the architect's primary responsibilities in design and in design project delivery: *Design, Detailed Design and Documentation, Design Delivery, Professional Practice.*

Recommendation 3. Revise Performance Criteria to reduce repetition - focussing less on the linear project phases and more on the core component of professional obligations of the architect in relation to design services to clients; acknowledging that the functional aspects of these obligations may apply differently across projects depending upon the project type, scale and context of risk and liabilities.

² The Professional Capabilities replace the current Knowledge Domains, and are reduced in number from five to four.

Recommendation 4. Remove Elements, the current subgrouping of Performance Criteria under the four units of competency, in order to reduce linearity and repetition in the NSCA.

Recommendation 5. Review language and organisation of the Performance Criteria in order to improve user understanding of how Performance Criteria are applied at differing levels across the contexts of the competency profiles of the Architectural Graduate, the Architectural Graduate at Registration and the Registered Architect.

Proposed model for reframing of the NSCA

To facilitate understanding how the recommendations may be expressed in the revised NSCA the Expert Reference Group is proposing a reframing of the NSCA.

A diagrammatic representation of the proposed model for reframing of the NSCA is included at **Enclosure 3**.

See also the sample text at **Enclosure 4** provided to encapsulate the proposed reframing of Knowledge Domains to Professional Capabilities, and **Enclosure 5** for samples of how Performance Criteria may be reframed around the suggested competency profiles of the Architectural Graduate, the Architectural Graduate at Registration and the Registered Architect (as noted at Recommendation 5).

Consultation framework

Stakeholders are asked to provide feedback on:

1. The extent to which the five Issues for Consideration accurately reflect the major issues that should be addressed in the review of the NSCA.
2. Comment on the proposed five Recommendations for Change.
3. Comment on whether implementation of the recommended changes will likely result in an updated NSCA that:
 - a. broadly reflects the role of an architect across the diversity of modes of practice
 - b. represents the needs of regulators
 - c. reflects current and emerging risks across the profession as a whole
 - d. is fit for purpose as the benchmark for AACA assessment programs.

How to respond:

- Responses should be compiled using the Guidance for Responding to the Issues Paper as described at **Enclosure 6**. Your support in using the requested structure will assist the AACCA and ERG in analysing all feedback, identifying the relative merit of recommendations, and the drafting of revisions to the Standard. Respondents are encouraged to favour concise statements of support and/or alternative views and recommendations rather than general comment.
- All responses should be forwarded to 2020reviewnsca@aca.org.au. Note that upon submission to AACCA, all responses will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt.
- Responses must be received by AACCA by no later than **Friday 31st July**.

References

[Terms of Reference](#) for the Review of the National Standard of Competency January 2020

[Guide to the National Standard of Competency for Architects](#)

[Explicit reference to the Focus Areas from Initial Survey mapped to the NSCA](#)

[Survey results NSCA survey February 2020](#) Mapping of survey results against key areas for change, updated 1 June 2020

[Institutionalising National Standards: A History of the Incorporation of the AACCA and the NSCA](#), Kirsten Orr, 2015

Enclosure 1

Overview of the Format of the current 2015 edition of the NSCA

The National Standard of Competency for Architects comprises four units of competency, 9 elements and 70 Performance Criteria relevant to the activities of professional architectural practice. Five Knowledge Domains underpin the entire framework, providing the background knowledge required to engage in architectural practice.

The NSCA is published in an [interactive format](#)³ to allow individual mapping of programs against the Performance Criteria and also allows comparisons of the Performance Criteria required across programs at different levels. One of the key changes incorporated in the last review in 2014/2015 was removal of the 'statement of context' information, and introduction of the five 'knowledge domains'.

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

Incorporation of the different levels of assessment (knowledge, skills, application) allow application of the standards at different points in an architect's education and development.

Each of AACCA's assessment processes requires the demonstration of a range of Performance Criteria described in the NSCA. The context of assessment processes is generally to the level of a Complex Project*, noting that architectural projects take many forms.

**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.*

³ <http://competencystandardforarchitects.aaca.org.au/about>

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 nine 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.

The nine elements, within the four Units of Competency, are:

Design Unit

1. Project Briefing
2. Pre-Design
3. Conceptual Design
4. Schematic Design

Documentation Unit

5. Detailed Design
6. Documentation

Project Delivery Unit

7. Procurement
8. Construction Stage

Practice Management Unit

9. Practice Management

Performance Criteria

The nine Elements of practice are supported by 70 Performance Criteria. Each Performance Criteria is an evaluative statement that specifies the performance required to demonstrate a Standard of Competency through the Elements.

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.

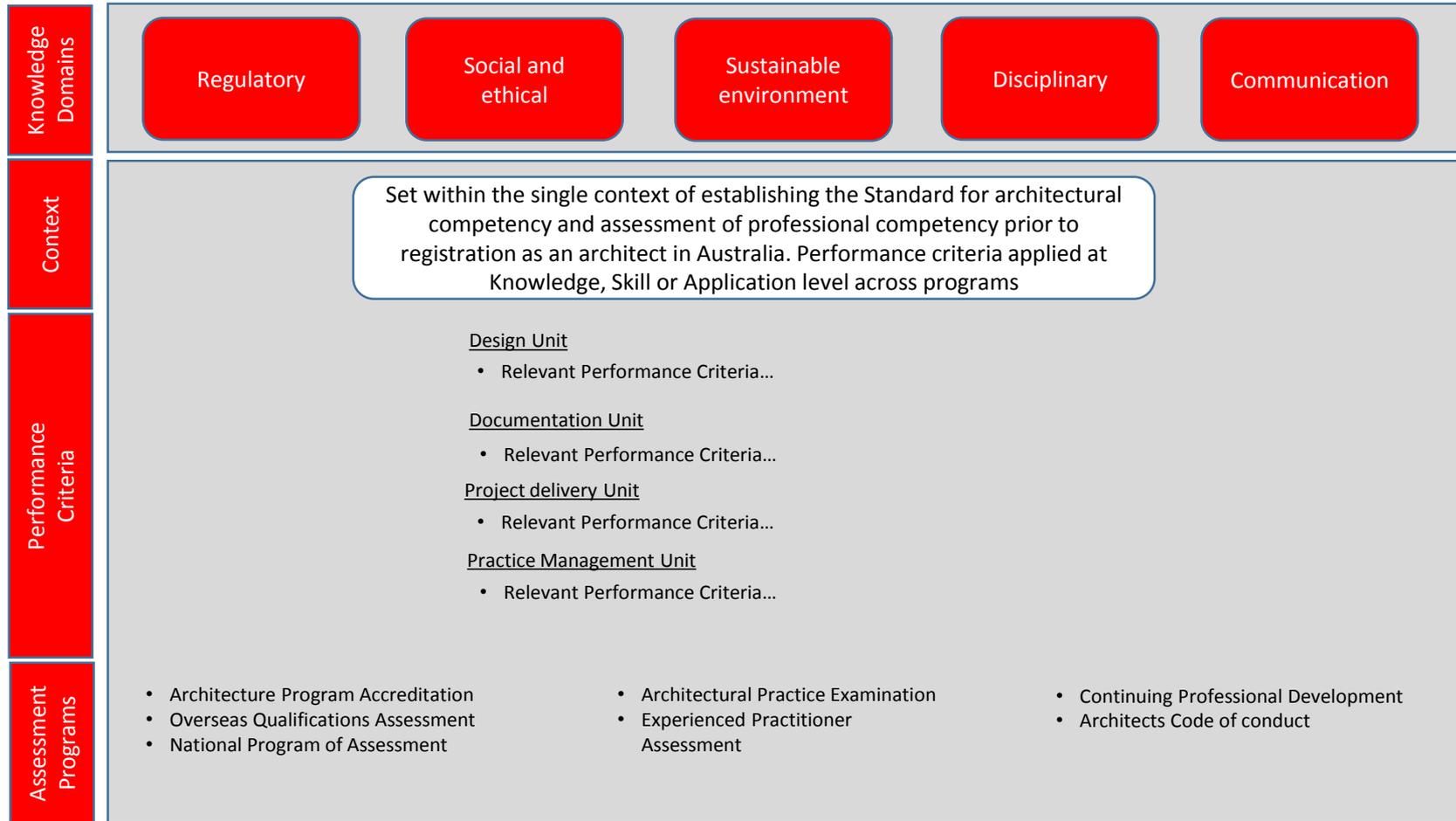
Sustainable Environment Domain Understanding the responsibility of architects to minimise the impact on natural resources and design for longevity.

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.

Enclosure 2

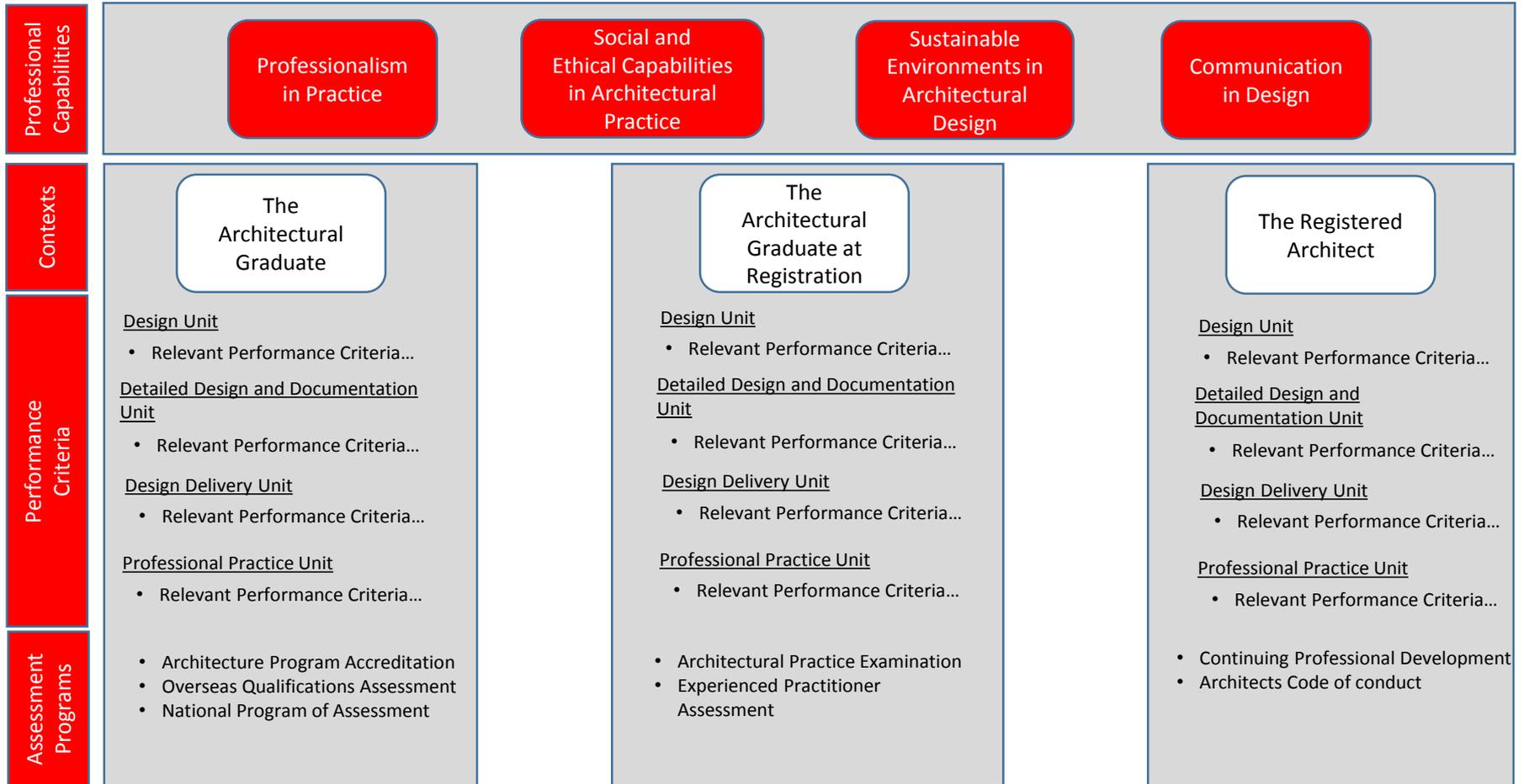
Diagrammatic representation of the current 2015 NSCA Framework



Enclosure 3

Diagrammatic representation of the proposed model for reframing of the NSCA

Key changes: Explicit recognition of the development of competency across **defined contexts**, knowledge domains **re-framed** as professional capabilities



Enclosure 4

Sample Text for proposed reframing of Knowledge Domains to Professional Capabilities

Examples of how the current Knowledge Domains may be reframed as Professional Capabilities.
 (Note: the text under the Professional Capabilities in Column 2 are included as a working draft for the purpose of testing the concept of Professional Capabilities as represented in the concept diagram at Enclosure 2.)

Current NSCA	Reframing – proposed working draft text for inclusion in updated NSCA
<p>Knowledge Domains (overview) 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.</p> <p>The Knowledge Domains are described below</p>	<p>Professional Capabilities (overview) The Professional Capabilities describe critical professional capabilities that underpin practice as an architect in Australia</p> <p>The Professional Capability areas are described below</p>
<p>Regulatory Domain Knowledge of the regulations, standards and codes, relevant to all aspects of architectural practice, including project design, delivery and other professional capabilities.</p> <p>Disciplinary Domain Knowledge of histories and theories relevant to architecture, practice, building and technologies.</p>	<p>Professionalism in Practice Understand and implement responsibilities of architects to clients, project stakeholders and broader communities.</p> <p>Ensure design decisions relevant to all aspects of architectural services reflect changing architectural contexts, and are based upon current industry regulations, standards and codes, and Architect Codes of Conduct.</p> <p>Be aware of and apply emergent knowledge relevant to design advice.</p> <p>Demonstrate commitment to maintaining and improving professional competency in order to provide the standard of service reasonably expected of architects in Australia.</p> <p>Provide design advice informed by architectural history and theory, building science and technology, and in alignment with professional practice requirements.</p>

Current NSCA	Reframing – proposed working draft text for inclusion in updated NSCA
<p>Social & Ethical Domain Knowledge of the social, ethical and cultural values relevant to architectural practice and the impacts on project users and broader communities.</p>	<p>Social and Ethical Capabilities in Architectural Practice Apply social, ethical and cultural values relevant to architectural practice and demonstrate understanding of how these impact on project users and broader communities.</p> <p>Acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as traditional owners of the land.</p> <p>Demonstrate an ethical service-oriented commitment to responsible care for the environment.</p> <p>Promote ethical and fair workplace practices and policies.</p>
<p>Sustainable Environment Domain Understanding the responsibility of architects to minimise the impact on natural resources and design for longevity.</p>	<p>Sustainable Environment in Architectural Design Provide design leadership to minimise carbon emissions, profligate use of natural resources, and the application of relevant scientific knowledge.</p> <p>Understand how architecture and the built environment impacts on connection to country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Design propositions incorporate Indigenous perspectives.</p>
<p>Communication Domain Knowledge of appropriate verbal, written and visual means to communicate relevant aspects of architecture.</p>	<p>Communication in Design Use appropriate verbal, written and visual means to communicate relevant aspects of architectural design and architectural services to clients, stakeholders, industry partners and the wider community.</p> <p>Adopt appropriate and culturally sensitive communication with clients, consultants and stakeholders.</p>

Enclosure 5

Sample Text for proposed reframing of Performance Criteria to illustrate the competency profile at different stages of an architect’s professional career

Examples of how to re-frame existing Performance Criteria across proposed contexts – professional education, registration and post registration. (*Note: the example re-framing of the Performance Criteria below are a working draft for the purpose of testing the concept of use of the three proposed contexts*)

Current version of Performance Criteria	Potential reframing of Performance Criteria under proposed re-imagining of the NSCA using the three proposed competency profiles		
	The Architectural Graduate	The Architectural Graduate at Registration	The Registered Architect
1.5 Knowledge of different procurement processes available and evaluation of the impact these have on the project.	Understand procurement processes and the implications for the <i>architectural services being provided</i> .	<i>Knowledge of the</i> available procurement processes and the implications for the <i>architectural services being provided</i> .	<i>Provide specialised advice</i> to clients on available procurement processes and the implications for the <i>architectural services being provided</i> .
9.1 Knowledge of appropriate business models to ensure efficient, effective and ethical professional service.	<i>Awareness of</i> available practice and business models in general and the values associated to ensure efficient, effective and ethical professional service in the public interest.	9.1 Knowledge of appropriate <i>practice and</i> business models to ensure efficient, effective and ethical professional service.	9.1 <i>Apply</i> Advanced knowledge <i>and</i> experience of <i>professional practice</i> business models in order to provide, value through competent, timely, effective and ethical professional services to clients.
9.7 Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements and obligations in regard to architectural practice, practice management and registration as an architect.	9.7 Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements and obligations in regard to architectural practice, practice management and registration as an architect.	9.7 Demonstrate the capacity to apply knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements and obligations in regard to architectural practice, practice management and registration as an architect.	9.7 <i>Comply with</i> industry and regulatory requirements relating to professional services, ethical workplace practices and Architect Codes of Conducts

Enclosure 6

Guidance for Responding to the NSCA Issues Paper

General guidance

Thank you for your interest in the review of the National Standard of Competency for Architects

Organisations and individuals that plan to submit a response to the AACCA on the 2020 NSCA Review Issues Paper are requested to use the structure as outlined. Your support in using the requested structure will assist the AACCA and ERG in analysing feedback, identifying the relative merits of recommendations, and the drafting of revisions to the NSCA. Respondents are encouraged to favour concise statements of support and/or alternative views and recommendations rather than general comment.

Please ensure you include on page 1 of your submission:

- The name of the stakeholder group making the submission
OR
- The name of the individual making the submission.

To facilitate consideration of responses your submission your submission should be organised via these three sections

1. Comments on the issues for consideration
2. Comments on the recommendations for change
3. Comment on the extent to which the proposed approach to revisions to the NSCA will meet the terms of reference established.

All responses should be forwarded to 2020reviewnsca@aacca.org.au by no later than **Friday 31st July**. Upon submission, all responses will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt.

1. Issues for Consideration

The 5 issues as discussed in the Issues Paper

- Issue 1. Changes in the context of practice
- Issue 2. Use of the NSCA across competency contexts
- Issue 3. Format and Language
- Issue 5. Linear format of the NSCA
- Issue 4. Inadequate ethical perspectives to the NSCA

Do the five Issues for Consideration accurately reflect the major issues that need to be addressed in the review of the NSCA? Please make comments against each individual Issue numbered from 1 to 5.

Any other comments?

2. Recommendations for Change

The five individual recommendations for change in the NSCA:

Recommendation 1. Conceive the NSCA as a Framework of Professional Competency viewed through specified Professional Capabilities⁴: Professionalism in Practice (incorporating the content areas of the existing Disciplinary and Regulatory Knowledge Domains), Social and Ethical Capabilities in Architectural Practice, Sustainable Environments in Architectural Design, and Communication in Design.

Recommendation 2. Retain four units of competency with a refocus on the architect's primary responsibilities in design and in design project delivery: *Design, Detailed Design and Documentation, Design Delivery, Professional Practice.*

Recommendation 3. Revise Performance Criteria to reduce repetition - focussing less on the linear project phases and more on the core component of professional obligations of the architect in relation to design services to clients; acknowledging that the functional aspects of these obligations may apply differently across projects depending upon the project type, scale and context of risk and liabilities.

Recommendation 4. Remove Elements, the current subgrouping of Performance Criteria under the four units of competency, in order to reduce linearity and repetition in the NSCA.

Recommendation 5. Review language and organisation of the Performance Criteria in order to improve user understanding of how Performance Criteria are applied at differing levels across the contexts of the competency profiles of the Architectural Graduate, the Architectural Graduate at Registration and the Registered Architect.

When making comments about any of the Recommendations, please refer to them by the individual Recommendation number.

Any other comments?

3. Achieving the project terms of reference

In summary, when considering the full impact of the six recommendations for change, do you believe that once the recommended changes are implemented they will likely result in an updated NSCA that:

- a. broadly reflects the role of an architect across the diversity of modes of practice
- b. represents the needs of regulators
- c. reflects current and emerging risks across the profession as a whole
- d. Is fit for purpose as the benchmark for AACA assessment programs.

Please make specific comment in reference to items a to d, representing the project Terms of Reference.

Any other comments?

⁴ The Professional Capabilities replace the current Knowledge Domains, and are reduced in number from five to four.