



# Overseas Qualifications Assessment Stage 2

Guide for Applicants

Read this guide if you are applying for an Overseas Qualifications Assessment - Stage 2



## Overseas Qualifications Assessment on the path to registration as an architect

To register as an architect with a state or territory architect registration board in Australia, generally applicants must have completed an [Australian accredited architectural qualification](#) (or successfully completed the AACA's Overseas Qualifications Assessment) before sitting the [Architectural Practice Examination](#).

See here for all [pathways to registration](#) as an architect in Australia.

AACA's Overseas Qualifications Assessment process, conducted in two stages, determines whether an individual overseas academic qualification compares with a current [Australian accredited qualification in architecture](#). Once an applicant's qualification has been deemed comparable, he/she is eligible to undertake the Architectural Practice Examination (APE), successful completion of which is required before applying for registration as an architect with a state or territory [architects registration board](#).

If you hold an [accredited architecture qualification](#) from Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong or Singapore, you DO NOT need to complete the Overseas Qualification Assessment. You may apply for a Skills Assessment based upon completion of an accredited architecture qualification via the [Verification of Australian Qualification](#) process.

### Stage 1 - Provisional Assessment

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must have completed a 5 year full-time equivalent architectural qualification awarded by an institution outside of Australia and may reside in Australia or overseas.
- **Professional Experience:** Not assessed. Evidence of work experience will not be taken into account.
- **Outcome:**
  - Successful applicants are provided with an outcome that also meets the requirement of a Skills Assessment for migration purposes.
  - Unsuccessful applicants receive a letter indicating the unsuccessful outcome, reasons are not included. No guidance is provided about how to upgrade the qualification/s.
- **Timeframes:** Applications are generally finalised within 12 weeks.

### Stage 2 – Portfolio submission and interview

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must have completed Stage 1 (irrelevant of the outcome) and be a lawful resident in Australia.
- **Professional Experience:** Can be used in the project examples provided in the portfolio.
- **Outcome:**
  - Successful applicants are provided with a Skills Assessment letter for migration purposes (if required) and a letter that acts as an authority to enrol to complete the Architectural Practice Examination (APE).
  - Unsuccessful applicants are provided written advice as to where they are deficient and how to upgrade their qualifications<sup>1</sup>.
- **Timeframes:** Applications are generally finalised within 12 weeks.

*1. Having addressed the deficiencies identified by AACA, unsuccessful applicants may complete the specified study and then submit evidence to AACA and an amended qualifications assessment and a Skills Assessment letter will be issued at no additional cost. Time limitations do apply.*

## 1. Overview

Stage 2 completes the Overseas Qualifications Assessment. Through the submission of a project portfolio and participation in a face-to-face interview, applicants have the opportunity to demonstrate how their qualifications have equipped them with the skills, knowledge and competencies required to satisfactorily meet the relevant criteria of the [National Standard of Competency for Architects \(NSCA\)](#). This is the minimum standard required of a graduate from an accredited program of study in Australia.

Each of the relevant thirty-seven (37) required performance criteria in the National Standard of Competency must be demonstrated at the level indicated, being one of the following:

- **Knowledge acquisition;** applicant demonstrates a clear understanding, no requirement for application or demonstration of skill.
- **Skill acquisition;** applicant demonstrates skill, no requirement for application in practice.
- **Application of Knowledge and Skill in architectural practice;** applicant demonstrates a clear understanding and can demonstrate where they have applied it in architectural or practice scenario.

Applicants submit a portfolio of between 4 and 6 projects, compiled from any combination of academic and/or professional work, mapped into the National Standard of Competency for Architects Performance Criteria Checklist in a way that clearly demonstrates how the work meets the performance criteria. This is followed by an interview where applicants have the opportunity to articulate the ways in which their academic qualification/s and portfolio of work demonstrates these competencies.

The outcome is determined by the applicant's ability to convincingly demonstrate that they possess the competencies required to adequately meet the relevant performance criteria. Successful participants are then eligible to sit the Architecture Practice Examination (APE) for registration as an architect in Australia.

## 2. Eligibility

To be eligible to submit an Overseas Qualifications Assessment Stage 2 application, you must:

- a. **Have completed the Stage 1 Provisional Assessment of the Overseas Qualifications Assessment, regardless of the outcome.** If you have previously received an unsuccessful outcome in Stage 1, you are still eligible to submit a Stage 2 application.

- b. **Be a lawful resident of Australia.**

Supply proof of residency, either:

- i. High quality scan of photo page of Australian passport.
  - ii. Permanent or relevant temporary visa that allows you to work without limitations, as issued by Department of Immigration and Border Protection, including a Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) notification. Temporary visa should have a minimum three months remaining. Applicants on tourist visas are not eligible to apply.
- c. **Demonstrate English language proficiency.**  
Required if the qualification was undertaken in a language other than English. Evidence of English proficiency may be:
    - i. IELTS Test Certificate with an overall band score of 6.5 or above, issued within the last three years; or
    - ii. Letter from current employer stating that the applicant has a standard of English appropriate for professional practice in architecture.

## 3. Assessment Process

- a. **Submission.** Your application is lodged to AACA online. See Section 12 *How to Submit* for further information.
- b. **Receipt of Application.** AACA will email a receipt to the nominated contact, normally within 3 business days of having received the application.
- c. **Application Verification.** The application and supporting documentation is reviewed by AACA for completeness. Processing of the application will not commence until all required information has been received, documents are appropriately witnessed, a high-quality scan of originals is provided (in colour and a minimum resolution of 300 dpi), and payment has been confirmed. Should deficiencies be identified, AACA will contact the applicant (or their nominated agent) to seek clarification or additional information. This may delay the assessment process.
- d. **Interview:** A face-to-face interview will be conducted between the applicant and two experienced architect assessors to discuss the applicant's project portfolio and determine the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated that they satisfactorily meet the relevant performance criteria of the National Standard of Competency for Architects.

Interviews take approximately one hour and are held at the office of the Architect Registration Board in the state or territory in which the applicant is applying to register (interviews for applicants in NSW will be held at the AACA office in Sydney).

Applicants are required to bring the following printed items to the interview:

- One full-colour A3 copy of the portfolio,
- Project Summary Proforma, and
- NSCA Performance Criteria checklist.

In order to determine the extent to which an applicant meets the relevant competencies required of a current Australian accredited architectural qualification, at the interview assessors will discuss:

- content of the course leading to the qualification(s) held; and
- Project Portfolio provided with the application.

- e. **Outcome:** Following the interview, a letter of outcome will be issued, usually within five working days.

**Successful applicants** will be eligible to sit the Architecture Practice Examination (APE), and after passing the exam, may apply for registration as an architect. On request from the applicant, a Skills Assessment for migration purposes will be issued when required to successful applicants.

**Unsuccessful applicants** will be given feedback related to the areas of the Performance Criteria which were not satisfactorily met, and will be provided advice as to where they are deficient and how to improve their skills.

- f. **Appealing a decision:** Applicants may appeal decisions made by AACA. The appeal must be lodged in writing with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AACA within 28 days from the date of notification of the result. Applicants must state clearly the grounds for the appeal.

## 4. Submission Requirements

Applicants are required to submit their application online. See Section 12 for further information about how to submit.

Where required, documents must be translated into English. Further guidance on translation is provided at Section 7.

AACA reserves the right to contact educational and governmental institutions, agencies and project referees for additional information and/or verification of the authenticity of any documents and information.

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

All forms can be downloaded from the first page of the online application. Applicants are required to submit the following documents (ensure that PDFs are not password protected):

1. **Statutory Declaration** (Section 8 of the online application form) signed and dated by the applicant, and signed by an authorised witness.
2. **Project Summary Statement** In a separate document, summarise the project material presented in your portfolio and describe briefly the scope of each project, its context and your involvement. The statement should be between 500 - 800 words (a maximum of two A4 pages).
3. **Project Portfolio** of your work containing minimum of four (4) and maximum of six (6) student or professional projects, organised to map two examples against each of the 37 NSCA performance criteria. See Section 5 for further guidance on how to prepare your project portfolio.
4. **NSCA Performance Criteria Checklist** (use the template in the form) map two examples against each of the 37 NSCA performance criteria.
5. **Project Summary Proforma** (use the template in the form) Provide an overview and description of each project in your portfolio.
6. Proof of **Residency Status** either:
  - i. Permanent or relevant temporary visa as issued by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, including a Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) notification; or
  - ii. High quality scan of Australian passport of the photo identification page.
7. **English Proficiency** (if applicable – see Section 2 Eligibility)
  - i. IELTS test certificate; or
  - ii. Employer Letter.
8. **Evidence of registration** as an architect with an authorised body (if applicable). Please be aware of the Australian Architect's Act (by state/territory).
9. **Evidence of change of name** (if applicable).
10. **Reference** (when including professional projects in the portfolio): Use the template to include one reference letter from a current or recent employer who is a registered architect in Australia, confirming your role in a project and the relevant performance criteria as described in the portfolio.
11. **Authorising letter for agent** signed by you authorising another person to act on your behalf (if applicable).
12. **English translations** of any of the above documents that are in a language other than English (if applicable). See Section 7 of this Guide for guidance on translations.
13. **Payment of Fee.**

## 5. Portfolio Guidance

A portfolio of 4-6 architectural projects should be submitted according to the following guidelines.

It may be compiled from student and/or professional work and mapped accordingly to the NSCA Performance Criteria in the [Performance Criteria Checklist](#). It is recommended to include the final year student project.

The portfolio may also include or refer to: design competition entries; awards; drawings/digital designs (schematic and technical); reports; projects; thesis extracts; handbooks/coursework; publications in journals/magazines; images of models (digital/physical); thesis extracts; professional correspondence between clients/specialists/stakeholders; and/or extracts from legislation or professional/industry publications.

### Portfolio Formatting Requirements

- Maximum of 80 pages.
- Landscape format, A3.
- Submit as a single PDF file, maximum file size of 60MB.
- Order your portfolio by projects and within each project by performance criteria. Start with all of the performance criteria for your Project 1, and then include those you have mapped with Project 2, and so on.
- Use the same layout on each page and include:
  1. project number and name.
  2. performance criteria being demonstrated (number and text from the NSCA list)
  3. description of your content.
  4. brief explanation of how the content demonstrates the performance criteria.
  5. page number (to be referenced in the NSCA Performance Criteria Checklist).

When responding to performance criteria that relate to design phases, then include a set of drawings of the project in your portfolio.

Include any miscellaneous examples (not specifically related to your projects) at the end of your portfolio under the project title 'Miscellaneous'. Such examples, including extracts from regulations and laws, or drawings from any other, unnamed project, can only be provided for criteria that are related to Knowledge acquisition (*K*). For such knowledge-based criteria (*K*) it is sufficient to include only one example.

**Note:** Ensure you remove any sensitive information from the submission i.e. client names and contact details, addresses, business names etc.

#### Translation

Labels and annotations in your portfolio that are not in English do not require translation provided they do not affect the understanding of content.

## 6. Portfolio Examples



### Project 3: Coastal Home

4.1 Evaluation of design options in relation to project requirements

#### Option 1 Ground Floor

This design comprises of four pavilions plus services space with corridors joining the space.

#### Option 2 Ground Floor

This design has better flow, opening out in to one large space. It is open plan and the living room dominates the space.

The project brief required a large living space with seamless indoor-outdoor transition. The main rooms focused towards the beach and sea below (NE). In Option 1 the spaces feel smaller and more separated, whereas Option 2 open living clearly focuses towards the beach.

1

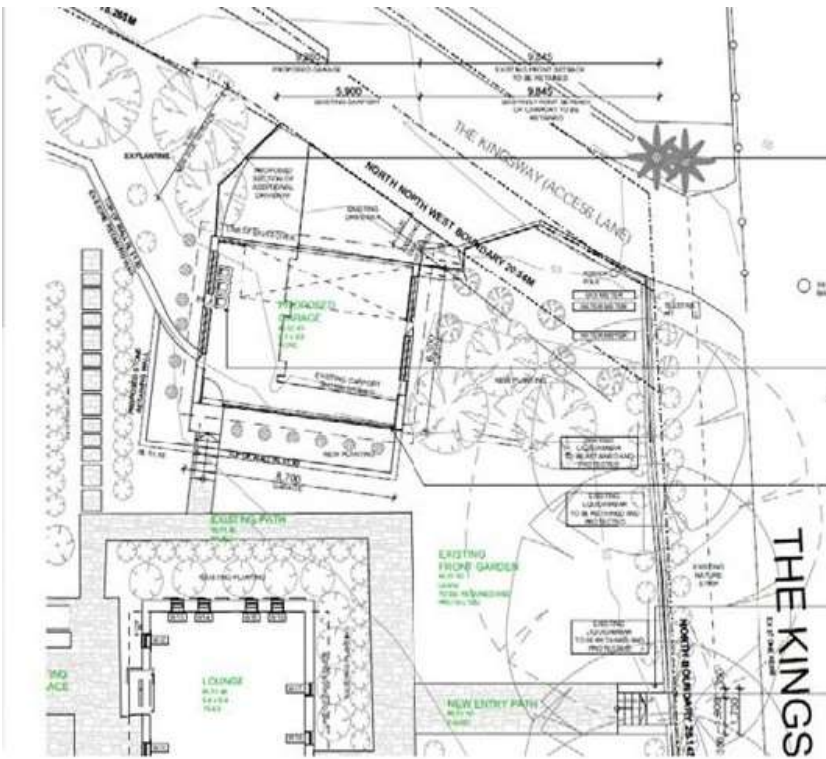
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**Project 4: Heritage**

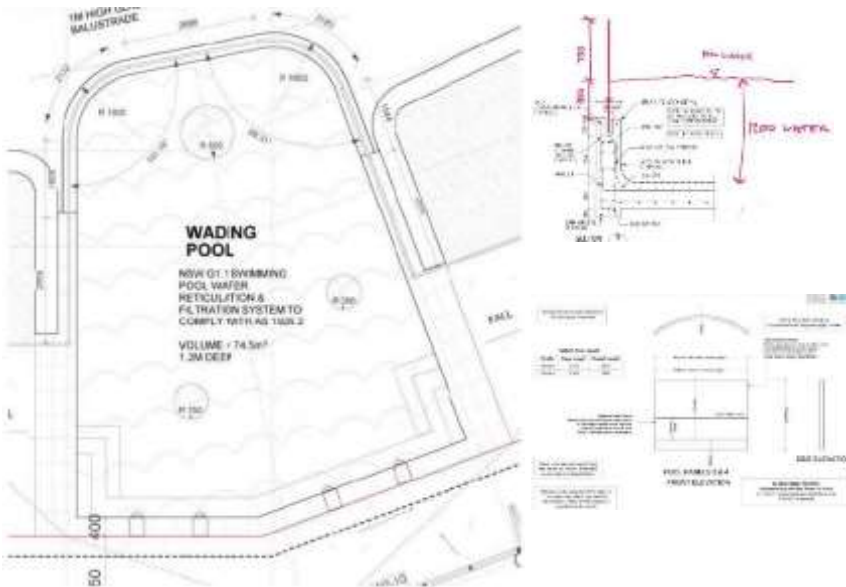
**5.3 Evaluation of integration of regulatory requirements**

The client's requirement for a new garage and driveway access was addressed in our concept design. However, upon review at a Pre DE Meeting with council we were advised that this option was not worth pursuing due to the heritage nature of the site and the current 'garden setting' of the carport.

The council's physical, environmental guidelines indicated that the desired future character of dwellings constructed pre 1920, which applies to this dwellings constructed in the 1880s were:

- Style of residence and consistency of building materials in any alterations visible from the street
- Open space all around residences
- Original fences and gateways
- Original entry lights
- Established gardens and mature streets
- Existing kerb and gutter regime
- Remnant forest vegetation

To integrate the regulatory requirements we proposed retaining the existing driveway and relocated the garage to the existing carport location. It was redesigned to retain the existing garden setting context.



**Project 5: Hotel**

**6.2 Continuing coordination and integration of information and project material from relevant consultants, specialists and suppliers**

Initially we consulted the glass manufacturers regarding the limits of the glass, e.g. the limits to the radius it can be curved and the thickness of glass needed.

We updated our drawings to reflect a 1500 radius which changed the shape of the overhanging pool façade.

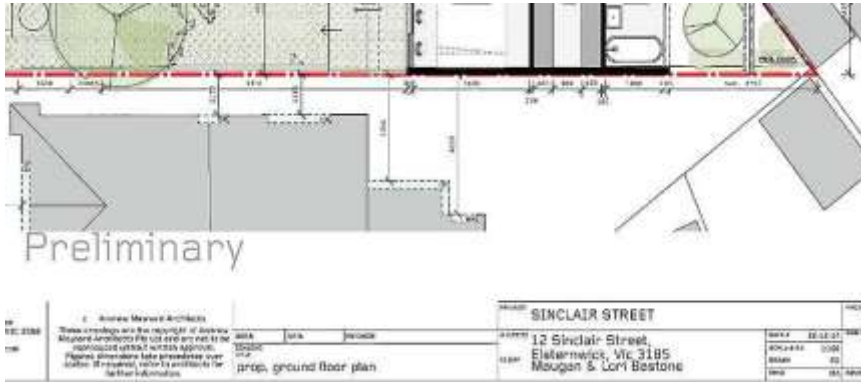
The structural engineer designed the concrete pool structure and rebate for the glass but we needed to consult a glass engineer for the details.

We consulted glass engineers to design the partially submerged glass panel. They provided the certification of the glass design to withstand the applicable hydraulic and live loads. This was necessary to ensure safety and strength of the glass panels.



Project: Residential

9.5 Knowledge of the legal and ethical obligations relating to copyright and intellectual property requirements



Example of copyright used in practice.

PI Insurance Requirements - Information for Architects

1. A Link to the Ministerial Order is at the bottom of this page.
2. Architects are required to fully familiarise themselves with the Ministerial Order, but for convenience, the following summary of the requirements is offered.

Type of Insurance required

Architects must be covered by Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance. The policy needs specifically to cover architects.

Indemnity must be provided

Architect directors, principals, partners, or employees, or sole practitioners should be covered by the policy. An architect is covered if he or she holds the insurance or is named or otherwise referred to in the policy held by an employer or the firm.

Amount of Insurance required

Not less than \$1 million plus not less than \$200,000 or 20% for defence costs, with one automatic re-instatement.

Proof to be supplied to the ARBV

Practising architects are required to provide the Board with proof of PI cover as a condition of registration in the Practising Class. The form of proof required is a Certificate of Currency or equivalent. A new Certificate of Currency needs to be provided to the Board when the policy is renewed or changed, or if the architect changes employer and is covered by a different policy. **Please note** that practising architects are no longer required to supply the certificate with their annual fee payment. Proof should be preferably emailed as a PDF to registrar@arbv.vic.gov.au. Please make clear in the message whose registration the proof is being provided for. Architects in the Practising Class who do not provide the required proof of compliant PI cover may have their registration suspended.

Definition in the Ministerial Order of Architects requiring Insurance

The Order generally applies to "Practising architects" that is all registered architects who "carry out work as an architect or intend to carry out work as an architect" (Extract from Architects Registration Board of Victoria Website: <http://www.arbv.vic.gov.au/?page=PIInsurance>)

Project: All

9.7 Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements and obligations in regard to architectural practice, practice management and registration as an architect

Extract from the Architects Registration Board of Victoria addressing the requirements for Personal Indemnity Insurance.

## 7. Translation of Documents

Any documents in a language other than English must be translated into English. The documents must be translated in full and copies of those translations submitted with the application. **Please note:** AACA does not ask for the translation of a syllabus (see under Section 4: Syllabus and Cover letter).

If the documents are translated in a country other than Australia, the translator must be approved by the authorities in the country where the translation is made. The International Federation of Translators [www.fit-ift.org](http://www.fit-ift.org) provides a list of certified associations.

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

## 8. Resources for Applicants

[Profile of the Profession in Australia](#)

[Regulation of the Architectural Profession within Australia – An Overview](#)

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

[State and Territory Architect Registration Boards](#)

## 9. Fees

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

Fees are not refundable once an application has been submitted.

AACA only accepts online credit card payments by VISA or MASTERCARD.

Payment can be made through the secure payment system once you have completed the online form and uploaded the required documents. Have your credit card details and card security code ready. All credit card transactions will be subject to a surcharge. Applicants will receive an email confirmation and payment receipt after payment has been successfully made.

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

## 10. Agents

Privacy provisions prohibit AACA from discussing applications with other people (third parties) unless specifically authorised to do so.

Should you wish to, provide a letter authorising a nominated person (by name) to act as your agent.

## 11. Timeframe

Applications are generally finalised within 12 weeks. Timeframes are dependent upon the submission of all necessary documentation and the availability of assessors for the conduct of the interview.

AACA can't guarantee the completion of an assessment in a specific timeframe when, despite provided guidance and support, an application does not meet the required standard, which could lead to the termination of an application.

## 12. How to Submit

Online application form: [Link to form](#) – all additional forms can be downloaded on the first page of the online form.

### Contacting AACA



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of Australia (AACA)  
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