



Overseas Qualifications Assessment Stage 1 - Provisional Assessment

Guide for Applicants

Read this guide if you are applying for an Overseas Qualifications Assessment – Stage 1



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 Qualifications 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 immigration purposes.
 - Unsuccessful applicants receive a letter indicating the unsuccessful outcome, reasons are not included. No guidance is provided about how to upgrade the qualifications.
- **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 enroll to complete the Architectural Practice Examination (APE).
 - Unsuccessful applicants are provided written advice as to where they are deficient and how to upgrade their qualifications¹.
- **Timeframes:** Applications are generally finalised within 12 weeks.

Combined Application (Stages 1 and Stage 2 completed concurrently)

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must have completed an architectural qualification awarded by institutions outside of Australia and be a lawful resident in Australia.
- **Professional Experience:** Can be used in the project examples provided in the portfolio
- **Outcome:** SAME AS FOR STAGE 2
- **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. Criteria for provisional assessment of overseas qualifications

AACA's Overseas Qualification Assessment process is used to determine the comparability of an overseas academic qualification/s with the requirement Australian accredited architecture qualifications. If an applicant's qualification has been deemed comparable he/she is eligible to undertake the [Architectural Practice Examination](#).

An [Australian accredited architecture qualification](#) is one that is approved by an Australian registration authority.

Qualifications must be completed through a coursework degree of a minimum duration of 10 semesters (5 year full-time equivalent). AACA does not assess qualifications obtained by research.

Please note: Many overseas qualifications include a compulsory period of practical experience. This does not contribute to the minimum period of study.

In forming its opinion on the status of an academic qualification compared to an Australian accredited academic qualification in architecture, applications are considered on a case-by-case basis using the following criteria:

- Education system in the country in which the qualification(s) was obtained compared to the Australian education system
- Status of the awarding institution compared to an Australian institution offering an accredited architectural program
- Academic duration of the qualification(s) (minimum 5 year full time equivalent coursework, excluding any practical components)
- Structure of the coursework program compared to an Australian accredited academic qualification in architecture, including the weighting given to individual units and core areas of study (by credit points and/or contact hours)
- Content of the individual units of study compared to an Australian accredited academic qualification in architecture
- Grading system used compared to an Australian accredited academic qualification in architecture.

It must be clearly demonstrated that your qualification adequately covers the following six prescribed core areas of study relevant to an Australian qualification:

- Design Studies and Design Integration
- Documentation and Technical Studies
- History and Theory Studies
- Practice and Project Management, Implementation and User Studies
- Environmental Studies
- Communication Studies

An explanation of what is covered by each of these core areas of study is provided at Section 5 of this Guide.

2. Eligibility

Applicants must have completed an academic qualification in architecture awarded by institutions outside of Australia. Multiple qualifications can be included in the application form.

Applicants may be residing in Australia or overseas, however, those residing in Australia are strongly encouraged to consider submitting the [OQA Combined Application](#).

There are no English language proficiency requirements for the Overseas Qualifications Assessment Stage 1 – Provisional Assessment, though the application form and cover letter must be completed in English.

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 three 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, and payment has been confirmed. Should deficiencies be identified, AACA will contact the applicant (or their nominated agent) to seek clarification or additional information which can delay the assessment process.
- d. **Desk-top assessment.** AACA completes a desk-top assessment of the qualification/s and makes a decision on comparability to an accredited Australian academic qualification in architecture based on the criteria outlined in Section 1 of this guide.
- e. **Outcome.** When the assessment is complete, AACA will post an Outcome Letter to the nominated contact at the address specified at Section 2 of the application form.

Where the application is assessed as **provisionally comparable (successful)** to an accredited Australian academic qualification in architecture, a **Skills Assessment** for migration purposes will be issued. Note that due to security issues, Skills Assessment letters are only issued in hard copy via mail.

Where the qualification/s have been assessed as being **provisionally not comparable (unsuccessful)** to an accredited Australian academic qualification in architecture, a letter indicating the unsuccessful outcome will be issued.

All applicants should note that once an applicant is resident in Australia, Stage 2 of the Overseas Qualifications Assessment must be completed before an applicant will be eligible to complete the [Architectural Practice Examination](#) and then be eligible to register as an architect.

An **unsuccessful** outcome in the OQA Stage 1 **does not** preclude an applicant from undertaking the Stage 2 of the Overseas Qualifications Assessment once an applicant is resident in Australia.

- 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. Further information regarding appeals can be accessed [here](#).

4. Submission Requirements

Applicants are required to submit their application online [via this link](#).

Where required, documents must be translated into English. Further guidance on translations is provided at Section 10.

As this is an assessment of qualifications only, no references (third-party comments) or evidence of work experience will be taken into account.

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

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. The application form has to be completed in English. Applicants are required to upload the following documents (ensure that PDFs are not password protected):

1. **Scanned original of degree or diploma*** for each academic qualification in the original language, as officially issued by the relevant institution or authority (no certified copies, hardcopies or black and white copies).
2. **Scanned original of academic transcript*** for each academic qualification in the original language, as officially issued by the conferring institution or authority. An academic transcript is a list of all units completed for the qualifications, including the weighting of each unit (in credit points and/or contact hours) and the marks obtained by the applicant.
3. **Course syllabus** included in cover letter for each academic qualification in the original language, as officially certified by the relevant institution or authority. The course syllabus should include a summary of the content of each unit of study. The syllabus must be relevant to the years when the qualification was undertaken and may be submitted via one of the following means:
 - a. URL in cover letter, where the relevant syllabus to the qualification undertaken by the applicant is directly available from the official university website without any log-in requirements.
 - b. If you have an English version of the syllabus relevant to the years of the qualification undertaken, you may scan it and email it separately to mail@aaca.org.au. Include your name and reference number issued with your online application. **Note:** AACA does not request the translation of a syllabus if it is not available in English.

Inability to supply a copy of the relevant course syllabus may be addressed in the cover letter, with a request to proceed with the application without this important information (see Section 4 under cover letter).

* All scans of originals in colour and with a resolution of 300 dpi or more. If an original certificate can't be provided, AACA may accept a letter from the institution confirming the applicant's documentation.

4. **Cover letter** (up to four A4 pages) addressing why you think your academic qualification(s) is equivalent to an Australian accredited academic qualification in architecture in terms of academic duration, the structure of the coursework program, the length of semester (in weeks), and core areas of study (refer to the criteria provided at Section 1).
5. When relevant, the cover letter should also address:
 - c. Any period of study completed at a different institution, such as through a student exchange.
 - d. Any period of practical work experience (when, how long, parallel to coursework or exclusive, if assessed/ by whom).
 - e. International accreditation of the program.
 - f. Integrated core subjects (for example, when Communication skills or History are included in Architectural Design units) and how they have been entered in the Self-Assessment-Matrix.
 - g. If you are unable to provide a syllabus relevant to the years of study for your qualification, you may comment on the content of your program and describe individual units (if their name/content may not be clearly understandable).
6. **Evidence of registration** as an architect with an authorised body (if applicable). Please be aware of the Architect's Act by state/territory).
7. **Evidence of change of name** (if applicable).
8. Section 7 of the online application form is the **Self-Assessment-Matrix**. This requires applicants to map the course content of their academic qualification(s) according to the six core areas of study prescribed from an Australian accredited qualification in architecture. See Section 5 of this guide for an explanation as to what is covered by each of the six core areas of study. See Section 6 of this guide for an explanation as to how to complete the Self-Assessment-Matrix.
9. **Applicant's Declaration Form** (Section 8 of the online application form) signed and dated by the applicant, and witnessed.
10. **Authorising letter for agent** signed by you authorizing another person to act on your behalf (if applicable).
11. **English translations** of any of the above documents that are in a language other than English (if applicable - see Section 10 of this guide).
12. **Payment of fee.**

5. Core Areas of Study

Each of the six core areas of study is described below.

1. Design Studies and Design Integration

Demonstrate an ability for propositional, imaginative, iterative, integrated thinking to synthesise complex architectural designs; an ability to support decision-making using evidence-based, reasoned argument and judgement; an ability to draw upon a knowledge of and the capacity to integrate design procedures, precedents, systems and construction processes; and an ability to synthesise this knowledge to problem solving and providing creative design solutions.

2. Documentation and Technical Studies

Demonstrate an understanding of the visual and contextual qualities of structural systems, construction elements, materials and building components; an ability to apply technical design processes and integrate structure, construction technologies and services systems into design solutions; and an ability to understand the role and characteristics of technical documentation and specifications in the development of buildable solutions.

3. History and Theory Studies

Demonstrated knowledge of architecture, its history and precedents; an ability to draw upon, interpret, integrate and apply this information, including heritage and conservation rationales, to modern design solutions; and an ability to research and evaluate emergent knowledge as it becomes necessary to fulfil the profession's role in society.

4. Practice and Project Management, Implementation and User Studies

Demonstrate an understanding of architecture's status as an ethical service-oriented profession committed to responsible care for the inhabited environment; an understanding of the principles of business management and their application to the built environment, project procurement and professional consultancy and an awareness of the relevant codes, regulations and standards for planning, design, construction, health, safety and use of the built environment.

5. Environmental Studies

Demonstrate a knowledge of people, environments and culture and the future impacts of architectural proposals on the lives of the people and the quality of environments affected; an understanding of ecological sustainability, urban planning and local demography, and the ability to synthesise this knowledge to inform design solutions.

6. Communication Studies

Demonstrate an ability to communicate with a variety of audiences in appropriate ways; an understanding of the various means used to communicate ideas; and an ability to prepare and read visual presentations, including drawings, diagrams, other graphic techniques and modelling using manual and electronic means.

Relevant Elective Studies

Demonstrate an awareness of broader cultural context in which architecture is practiced; and/or an understanding of the specialisations associated within the architecture discipline.

Other Subjects

Any other subjects as listed in your academic transcripts.

6. Instructions for completing the Self-Assessment Matrix

The aim of completing the Self-Assessment Matrix (Section 7 of the application form) is to map the content of your qualification(s) against **the six core areas of study** prescribed in the *Australian and New Zealand Architecture Program Accreditation Procedure (ANZ APAP)* for an Australian accredited qualification in architecture.

Credit points (and/or contact hours) of individual units are required for identifying the focus of the program.

Unit Code

Enter the unit number as it appears on your academic transcript and in the course syllabus.

Unit Name

Enter the name of the unit of study as it appears on your academic transcript and in the course syllabus.

Qualification No.

Allocate each of your academic qualifications its own number for identification. Label the qualification that you completed first (for example, a Bachelor degree) as '1', and the qualification that you completed next (for example, a Master's degree) as '2', etc.

Year No.

Record the consecutive year of your study in which you completed each unit. For example, if your first qualification was 3 years and you completed the unit of study in the second year (semester 3 or 4), enter a '2'. If your second qualification was 2 years and you completed the unit of study in the second year, enter a '5'. **Note:** Do not write the year of study (e.g. 2017).

Credit Points

Enter the credit points allocated to the unit of study as it appears on your academic transcript and in the course syllabus. Note that different countries use different credit point systems. AACA will take this into account in assessing your application.

Contact Hours

Enter the total number of hours spent in class receiving tuition. This is usually specified in the course syllabus. It does not include additional time spent completing assignments. If this is not specified in the course syllabus, then you may provide an estimate. You should note in your cover letter if these details are an estimate or from the course syllabus.

Mode of Delivery

Record the way in which the tuition was presented. This is usually specified in the course syllabus. Common modes of delivery for academic qualifications in architecture include lecture, tutorial, design studio, workshop, online.

Syllabus Provided

Indicate yes or no.

Grade

Enter the grade you received for this unit of study as it appears on your academic transcript. Note that different countries use different grading systems. AACA will take this into account in assessing your application.

7. Outcome of Stage 1 Provisional Assessment

See earlier description of possible outcomes at Section 3e.

Applicants should retain the outcome letter issued at the completion of the Stage 1 (irrelevant of the outcome). AACA only issues one outcome letter at the conclusion of the Stage 1.

The Provisional Assessment conducted in the OQA Stage 1 is an opinion on the status of your academic qualification(s) and does not guarantee employment in Australia in the occupation of 'Architect'.

To become eligible to register as an architect in Australia you are required to have a recognised qualification in architecture (obtained by completing Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Overseas Qualifications Assessment program) and then pass the [Architectural Practice Examination](#) (APE).

Following completion of Stage 1, applicants may submit a [Stage 2](#) application, regardless of their Stage 1 outcome, as long as they are a lawful resident in Australia.

8. Information for Migration

The AACA is the authority nominated by the government of Australia for assessing overseas architecture qualifications for the purpose of migration to Australia under the Australian Government Skilled Migration Program, for the occupation 'Architect', ANZSCO code 232111.

Where the Overseas Qualifications Assessment Stage 1 application is assessed as **provisionally comparable** to an accredited Australian architecture qualification, a **Skills Assessment** for migration purposes will be issued. Note that due to security issues, Skills Assessment letters are only issued in hard copy.

Applicants seeking to migrate to Australia should include a certified copy of the **Skills Assessment** letter with their application to the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection. AACA's qualifications assessment does not guarantee a visa outcome or employment. Information on the migration process is available from the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) website, www.border.gov.au.

Please note: If you have an accredited academic qualification from an Australian School of Architecture please use the application for [Verification of Australian Accredited Architecture Qualification](#). A list of Australian accredited architecture qualifications can be found [here](#).

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 or call us on (02) 8042 8930 (within Australia) or +61 2 8042 8930 (outside Australia).

10. Translation of Documents

Any documents in a language other than English must be translated into English. The documents must be translated in full and certified copies must be submitted with the application. **Please note:** AACA does not ask for the translation of a syllabus (see at Section 4: Course 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 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 for a list of members.

11. 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.

12. Timeframe

Applications are generally finalised within 12 weeks.

Outcome letters are posted by mail and may take some time to arrive when posted to addresses outside of Australia. You may wish to arrange a courier to pick up your results at your own cost. Please wait at least 12 weeks after receiving your receipt before contacting AACA about the progress of your application. AACA will contact you if more information is needed.

13. 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



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



+612 8042 8930



mail@aaca.org.au



www.aaca.org.au