

## Factsheet

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# BEST PRACTICE FOR CPD PROVIDERS

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for NSW Architects

Clause 16 of the [NSW Architects Code of Professional Conduct](#) (the Code) requires that architects must report to the NSW Architects Registration Board (NSW ARB) that they have taken all reasonable steps to maintain and improve the skills and knowledge necessary for the provision of the architectural services they normally provide.

Architects should undertake a minimum of 20 hours of CPD each year, of which at least 10 hours must be Formal CPD activity.

For more information about NSW CPD requirements for architects, refer to the [Factsheet on Continuing Professional Development](#).

### Planning your CPD offerings

The NSW ARB does not accredit CPD providers. Instead, architects are responsible for self-determining which CPD activities they undertake based on what they consider appropriate to their individual needs. CPD for architects should have as its basis the [2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) (2021 NSCA).

Architects are expected to complete CPD activities relating to at least 2 of the 4 Units of Competency and a range of relevant Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#):

- Practice management & professional conduct
- Project initiation and conceptual design
- Detailed design and construction documentation
- Design delivery & construction phase services.

The Units of Competency are populated by a total of 60 Performance Criteria that describe discrete aspects of required knowledge and skills involved in architectural practice.

### The difference between 'Formal' and 'Informal' CPD activities

CPD activities can be provided in a variety of formats, including face-to-face and online. In all cases Formal and Informal CPD should be delivered by qualified presenters with appropriate academic, technical or practical expertise. All activities should be technically accurate, educational and well-balanced, and not just a marketing exercise to promote specific products or services.

### Formal CPD activities

Formal CPD activities are always structured. They must be intended to be educational and be additional to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment.

The Formal CPD activities you deliver must include:

- Presenters who have appropriate academic, technical or practical expertise, and
- Clearly stated learning outcomes that are mapped to relevant Units of Competency / Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#), and
- A structured assessment task to genuinely test participants' understanding of content  
*Assessment may take a variety of forms, for example a pop-quiz, test, self-check questions and answers, or a paper or report submitted after the activity. The participant should receive feedback from you on their performance in the assessment task so that they understand where their understanding of content may still be lacking.*

or

- A significant interaction between the presenter and the participant.  
*Significant interaction is direct communication between the presenter and the learner, requiring participants to complete individual or group tasks or actively participate in exercises, case studies, workshops, role-plays, discussions and so on. Note that the number of participants in face-to-face activities in this category should generally be limited to a maximum of 30-40 participants to allow for an appropriate level of interaction between the presenter and the participant.*

### Informal CPD activities

Informal CPD activities include self-directed study and professional activities that relate to practice as an architect. They must be intended to be educational and be additional to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment. They are not required to include assessment or significant interaction between the presenter and the participant.

### Best practice for Formal CPD providers

In providing Formal CPD you must:

- Keep records of your program of CPD activities, including date, activity name/description, relevant Unit(s) of Competency and Performance Criteria, category of activity (ie. Formal or Informal), and number of contact hours
- Keep accurate attendance records of participants' names and registration numbers for every activity you offer. This includes recording participants who arrive late or leave early from the activity
- Ensure records are kept for a minimum of seven years
- Provide in advance of every activity an outline of the learning outcomes mapped to the relevant Units of Competency / Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#) so that participants can make an informed decision about whether the activity is suited to their learning needs
- Provide in advance of every activity information about the academic, technical or practical expertise of the presenter so that participants can make an informed decision about undertaking the activity
- Provide at the conclusion of every activity all participants with a certificate of completion as proof of their attendance. The certificate must include their name and registration number, provider name, date, activity name/description, relevant Unit(s) of Competency and Performance Criteria, category of activity (ie. Formal or Informal), and number of contact hours. Certificates of completion should not be issued to participants who did not attend the entire activity. Receipts for payment are not acceptable in lieu of a certificate of completion.

- Provide at the conclusion of every activity all participants with evidence of their completion of a structured assessment task that has genuinely tested their understanding of content; or evidence that the activity was structured to include significant interaction between the presenter and participant.

## 2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA)

### Units of Competency

Four Units of Competency outline the required knowledge and skills involved in the practice of architecture:

- **Practice management and professional conduct**  
Holistic understanding of the organisation of the profession, practice and business of architecture, with the objective of providing value through sustainable, timely and effective professional services in accordance with the ethical and legal obligations of an architect to clients, colleagues, employees and to broader communities.
- **Project initiation and conceptual design**  
Intelligent, creative, iterative and culturally responsive processes of initiating a project and the early stages of design. This involves research, analysis and the exploration of approaches, design ideas and alternative solutions. It leads to a design concept that meets the client's brief, respects Country and is capable of compliance with planning controls and construction codes.
- **Detailed design and construction documentation**  
The process of developing the design through research, detailed assessment of options and the integration of technical solutions, value and cost control processes to maintain or enhance the design intent. The final design proposal is cohesive, fully described and resolved to achieve value and cost objectives, and compliance with planning controls and construction codes.
- **Design delivery and construction phase services**  
The provision of services to support project delivery through construction. This may occur through a variety of building procurement methods and construction contracts. The form of construction contract may establish different expectations and obligations upon the architect and may include contract administration services. Typically, all contract types include the timely and cost-effective management of design delivery, review, and inspection processes.

If you have any questions regarding CPD, please contact the NSW Architects Registration Board.

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