

## Factsheet

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# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

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 who fail to comply with CPD requirements may be removed from the NSW Register of Architects (the Register) pursuant to [section 24\(2\)\(g\)](#) of the [Architects Act 2003](#) (the Act), or may be found guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct pursuant to [section 43\(4\)](#) of the Act.

### WHAT are you required to report?

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

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

An effective CPD regime for architects should have as its basis the [2021 NSCA](#). Your CPD activities each year should relate to a minimum of 2 of the 4 Units of Competency from the [2021 NSCA](#):

- Practice management and professional conduct
- Project initiation and conceptual design
- Detailed design and construction documentation
- Design delivery and 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. You should explore a range of relevant Units of Competency and Performance Criteria in your CPD activities to strategically develop your knowledge and skills relevant to your career development needs, personal objectives and demands of your practice.

### HOW do you record and track CPD?

You should progressively record CPD activities as you complete them in the **My CPD** portal in [My Account](#). For each activity, you should record the date, activity name/description, provider name, relevant Unit(s) of Competency and Performance Criteria, category of activity (ie. Formal or Informal), and number of hours claimed for the activity. The **My CPD** portal will track your progress and will send you reminders if you are not meeting the annual milestones for CPD compliance.

### WHEN is your CPD report due and how often do you need to report?

CPD reporting is retrospective. Your CPD report is due at the time of your registration renewal and is submitted as part of the renewal process. You are required to report the CPD activities you completed during your last registration term at renewal.

Currently, 80% of architects have a registration renewal date of 30 June. For these architects, CPD reporting is due in the month of June. However, other architects who first registered in NSW after 1 July 2019, or were reinstated to the Register after 1 July 2019, may have a different renewal date that falls on the anniversary of the date of their initial registration or reinstatement. For these architects, CPD reporting is due in the month preceding the renewal date.

Login to [My Account](#) to confirm your renewal date.

If you have selected a 1-year registration term, you report your CPD activities annually. If you have selected a 3- or 5-year registration term you only report your CPD activities at the end of that registration term. In other words, you report CPD compliance on a 3- or 5-yearly basis. Nevertheless, you are still required to meet the minimum annual CPD requirements and to regularly complete CPD activities.

## HOW do you submit your CPD report?

Your CPD report is submitted as part of the registration renewal process.

The renewal portal will provide you with a summary of your CPD hours as recorded in **My CPD** and will state whether you have met, or not met, the CPD requirements. You will also be prompted to make a declaration that you have, or have not, complied with the CPD requirements for your last registration term. Once you have completed your registration renewal, you will find that your CPD for the last registration term has been automatically rolled over to an archive folder in **My CPD** (where it remains in perpetuity).

### When CPD requirements are met

If you have been correctly recording your CPD in **My CPD** portal and you have complied with the minimum CPD hours for your registration term, the renewal portal should state that you have met the CPD requirements. You will be able to tick-a-box to declare that you have complied with the minimum CPD hours for your registration term and will proceed to the next step of the renewal process. There is nothing further you need to do or upload to submit your CPD report.

### When CPD requirements are not met

If you have not recorded sufficient hours to comply with the minimum CPD hours for your registration term in **My CPD** the renewal portal will state that you have not met the CPD requirements. You will be given several tick-a-box options, allowing you to:

1. Exit the renewal portal and record more CPD hours in the **My CPD** portal in [My Account](#) before you continue with your registration renewal, or
2. Request a reduction in your required CPD hours (by uploading a letter outlining your circumstances with supporting documentation), or
3. Request an exemption from the CPD requirements (by uploading a letter outlining your circumstances with supporting documentation), or
4. Declare that you have not complied with the minimum CPD hours for your registration term. You will be required to upload a letter outlining your circumstances with supporting documentation.

*\*Note that architects who fail to comply with annual CPD requirements may be removed from the Register pursuant to [section 24\(2\)\(g\)](#) of the Act, or may be found guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct pursuant to [section 43\(4\)](#) of the Act.*

## Record keeping and supporting evidence

For every Formal CPD activity you record, you must upload to **My CPD** the supporting evidence to substantiate your completion of that activity. This should be uploaded as single PDF file not to exceed 3MB. Substantiating evidence will be reviewed by the NSW ARB if you are the subject of a CPD compliance audit. You must keep complete records of your CPD activities for at least 7 years.

### For provider-delivered CPD, the following evidence is typically required:

- A certificate of completion for every Formal CPD activity as proof of attendance. The certificate must include the participant's name and registration number, provider name, date, activity name/description, relevant Units of Competency / Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#), category of activity (ie. Formal or Informal), and number of contact hours for the activity. *Note that receipts for payment are not acceptable in lieu of a certificate of completion.*  
If the relevant Performance Criteria are not specifically identified by the provider, it is acceptable for you to make your own determination of which Performance Criteria were covered with reference to the title of the activity, activity content, and other activity documentation and materials.
- Evidence of the completion of a structured assessment task that has genuinely tested your understanding of content; or evidence that the activity was structured to include significant interaction between the presenter and the participant (eg. personal notes taken during the activity, or a photograph of work produced).

### Evidence for other types of Formal CPD activities may include as you consider relevant:

- Comprehensive personal handwritten or typewritten notes made during your participation in the CPD activity
- Evidence of preparation and delivery of CPD activities, such as a pdf of your slide deck, your speaker's notes, and/or your supporting research
- Evidence of teaching, such as the unit outline with your name as unit coordinator, lecture program, summary of unit content, intended learning outcomes, and/or relevant research
- Digital copies of publications you have authored.

### For Architects Learning Groups CPD, the following evidence is typically required:

- If you are the presenter, you should provide evidence of preparation and delivery of the Learning Session
- If you are a participant, you should provide evidence you consider relevant, such as comprehensive personal notes or other evidence of participation.

## What counts as Formal CPD?

**You must complete at least 10 hours of Formal CPD each year.** Formal CPD activities are structured and relate to practice as an architect. They are in addition to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment.

### Formal CPD activities fall under 8 categories:

1. Provider-delivered activities that include a structured assessment task that genuinely tests participants' understanding of content
2. Provider-delivered activities that are structured to include significant interaction between the presenter and the participant, such as a structured workshop where participants are required to complete an individual or group task

3. Activities that relate to the preparation and delivery of CPD activities (*\*max. 5 hours per year may be recorded in this category*)
4. Activities that relate to the teaching of architecture at a tertiary level and involve significant preparation and/or scholarship, as in the development of a new course and/or lecture content and/or the design of new curriculum (*\*max. 5 hours per year may be recorded in this category*)
5. Structured training activities delivered by the NSW ARB and the AACA for NSW Assessors who are engaged in the assessment of candidates of the various pathways to registration (*\*max. 3 hours per year may be recorded in this category*)
6. Authorship of published articles, books, papers (*\*max. 5 hrs per year may be recorded in this category*)
7. Participation in Architects' Learning Groups (*\*max. 3 hours per year may be reported for preparing and presenting Learning Sessions; max. 10 hours per year for participating in Learning Sessions*)
8. Conference attendance where the conference offers a specific CPD event or a stream of CPD sessions that meet the requirements outlined for provider-delivered Formal CPD.

#### **Provider-delivered Formal CPD activities must include:**

- New knowledge and skills being acquired from, or shared with, peers
- Learning outcomes that are clearly stated by the provider and mapped to relevant Units of Competency / Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#)
- A structured assessment task to genuinely test participants' understanding of content or significant interaction between the presenter and the participant
- Presenters who have appropriate academic, technical or practical expertise.

### **More information about Formal CPD**

#### **Activities with a structured assessment task**

A structured assessment component is an important feature of most provider-delivered Formal CPD activities. 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 the provider on their performance in the assessment task so that they understand where their understanding of content may still be lacking.

#### **Activities that include significant interaction between the presenter and the participant**

Significant interaction in any provider-delivered CPD activity is where there is direct communication between the presenter and learner, requiring participants to complete individual or group tasks or actively participate in exercises, case studies, workshops, role-plays, discussions and so on.

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 participants.

Examples of activities with significant interaction include:

- Small groups undertaking case studies, workshops, and seminars that may include written exercises with feedback from the presenter
- An online tool that requires participant interaction and input, for example, completing a set activity
- Participation in formalised group discussions involving a relevant case study
- 'In-house' training where the participant is required to complete specified tasks or activities.

## Architects' Learning Groups

Architects' Learning Groups are recognised by the NSW ARB to support the peer-to-peer education of NSW architects. The aim is to provide opportunities for architects to undertake Formal CPD activities within their own peer network. An Architects' Learning Group comprises 3 or more architects who have formed a group for the purpose of peer education. If the Group follows the Factsheet on Architects' Learning Groups, presenters and participants can claim Formal CPD hours.

For more information, refer to the [Factsheet on Architects' Learning Groups](#).

## What counts as Informal CPD?

**Up to 10 hours of CPD completed each year may be Informal CPD.** Informal CPD activities include self-directed study and professional activities that relate to practice as an architect. They are in addition to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment. Informal CPD activities are not required to include assessment or significant interaction between the presenter and the participant.

### Examples of Informal CPD activities include, but are not limited to:

- Self-directed study of practice notes, technical/professional journals, podcasts, etc
- Talks and presentations by peers
- Design lectures and seminars
- Structured visits to building sites, buildings and exhibitions
- Conference attendance (where sessions do not qualify as Formal CPD)
- Authorship of published articles / books / papers, etc (where not already reported as Formal CPD)
- Involvement in mentoring programs
- Tutoring in architecture at a tertiary level where there is no significant preparation and/or involvement in the development of new content or curriculum (eg. Design studio tutoring)
- Marking student work at a tertiary level (such as a guest critic role or other marking as a tutor)
- Participation as a NSW Assessor for the NSW ARB's Architectural Practice Examination or as an AACA Assessor for other pathways to registration
- Participation in professional practice committees and advisory groups through professional associations, regulatory authorities, or government bodies, such as Standards Australia
- Raising awareness of architecture in primary and secondary schools.

### Features of Informal CPD activities include:

- New knowledge and skills are acquired from, or shared with, peers
- Learning outcomes can be identified and be mapped to relevant Units of Competency / Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#)
- Activity is intended to be educational and is in addition to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment
- Consideration has been given as to how the knowledge and skills gained from the activity may be applied to practice or employment.

## Where to find CPD providers

The NSW ARB does not accredit CPD providers. There is a multitude of providers offering educational activities in a variety of formats, including face-to-face and online, to meet your CPD needs:

- Universities
- Professional and industry associations
- Membership organisations
- Architects' groups or networks
- Commercial education and training providers
- Employers
- Architects' Learning Groups
- NSW ARB
- Product and service suppliers (Note: all CPD activities should be technically accurate, educational and well-balanced, and not just a marketing exercise to promote specific products or services).

For more information about providing CPD in NSW, refer to the [Factsheet on Best Practice for CPD Providers](#).

## How to assess the quality of CPD activities

CPD providers should provide information in advance to assist you to make an informed decision about what CPD activities you choose to do. This should include information about the presenter and an outline of the learning outcomes mapped to the relevant Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#).

The cost of Formal CPD activities can vary considerably from provider-to-provider but does not necessarily reflect its quality or the degree of difficulty of the content. Shop around to identify activities that best suit your needs and budget. YOU are responsible for self-determining which CPD activities you undertake based on what you consider relevant and appropriate to your individual needs.

You might consider:

- The reputation of the CPD provider
- Does the presenter have appropriate academic, technical or practical expertise?
- Are the learning outcomes clearly stated and mapped to relevant Units of Competency / Performance Criteria from the [2021 NSCA](#)?
- Does the activity include a structured assessment task that will genuinely test your understanding of content? (important for Formal CPD)
- Are the activities structured to include significant interaction between participants and the presenter and what is the class size? (important for some Formal CPD)
- Is this activity relevant to your personal learning needs as an architect and will it improve essential skills and knowledge?
- Does this activity qualify as Formal CPD?



## Exemptions from CPD requirements

- Architects registered in the Non-Practising category are exempt from CPD requirements.
- Architects living overseas and/or only providing architectural services overseas are exempt from CPD requirements.
- Architects working in NSW under Automatic Mutual Recognition – Automatic Deemed Registration (ADR) are exempt from CPD requirements.
- Part-time work is not grounds for an exemption from CPD requirements and architects who work part-time are not entitled to a pro-rata calculation to reduce the number of CPD hours required.

Where an architect is unable to meet, or has not met, the minimum CPD hours required, the NSW ARB may take into account individual circumstances when considering whether all reasonable steps have been taken by the architect to meet their CPD obligations. Architects seeking a pro-rata exemption from the CPD requirements must at the time of renewing their registration upload a letter outlining their circumstances with supporting documentation. Matters that may be taken into consideration by the NSW ARB include:

- Parental leave during the registration term
- Unemployment for part of the registration term (at least 3 consecutive months)
- Serious illness or other misadventure suffered by the architect or an immediate family member
- Overseas location and/or travel for part of the registration term and not offering architectural services in NSW / Australia during that period (at least 3 consecutive months)
- Other exceptional circumstances, on a case-by-case basis.

Where extenuating circumstances are identified by the NSW ARB, a pro-rata calculation of the CPD requirement may be applied. For example, if an architect has spent 6 months of the last 12 months on parental leave, the NSW ARB may reduce the CPD requirement by 50%. In this example the architect's CPD requirement would be reduced to 10 hours of CPD for the previous 12-month period, of which at least 5 hours must have been Formal CPD activity.

## CPD compliance audits

Every year architects are randomly selected by the NSW ARB for a CPD compliance audit. The number of architects selected is proportionally adjusted, based on the duration of the registration term:

- 1-year term = 5% architects audited
- 3-year term = 15% architects audited
- 5-year term = 25% architects audited.

If you are subject to a CPD compliance audit you may be required to submit additional supporting evidence for the Formal CPD activities you have reported for your last registration term. You will not be notified that you have been selected for a CPD compliance audit unless the NSW ARB requires more information from you or considers that you may not have complied with CPD requirements.

Where an architect is not able to satisfy the NSW ARB Board that they have met their CPD obligations and where it is the Board's view that no extenuating circumstances apply, the architect may be removed from the Register pursuant to [section 24\(2\)\(g\)](#) of the Act, or may be found guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct pursuant to [section 43\(4\)](#) of the Act.

An architect who has been removed from the Register for failing to comply with CPD requirements is not eligible for a refund of registration fees. The architect may apply for re-registration at any time. However, prior to having their registration restored, the architect is required to provide evidence that since their removal from the Register, they have undertaken a minimum of 20 hours of CPD, of which at least 10 hours must be Formal CPD activity, or alternatively, provide details of any extenuating circumstances since their removal from the Register that may have prevented them from doing so.

## **Moving between Practising and Non-Practising categories**

Architects who apply to transfer from the Practising to the Non-Practising category are required to submit evidence that they have met the pro rata CPD requirements for their last registration term.

Architects who apply to transfer from the Non-Practising to the Practising category after having been in the Non-Practising category for 3 or more years are required to demonstrate that they have met the pro rata CPD requirements for the last 12-month period.

## **CPD requirements for reinstatement to the Register**

Architects who apply for reinstatement to the Register are required to demonstrate that they have complied with the minimum CPD hours for their last registration term. When an architect is unable to demonstrate the correct CPD hours for their last registration term, and where no extenuating circumstances exist that might qualify the architect for a pro-rata reduction or exemption from CPD requirements in the last registration term, the following will apply:

### **Less than 12-months since last registered:**

Prior to their reinstatement to the Register, the architect must complete the minimum CPD hours for their last registration term.

### **12-24 months since last registered:**

Prior to their reinstatement to the Register, the architect must complete the lesser of two options, either

- complete the minimum CPD hours for their last registration term, or
- complete 20 hours of Formal CPD.

### **More than 24 months since last registered:**

Prior to their reinstatement to the Register, and within the last 12-month period, the architect must complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD, of which at least 10 hours must be Formal CPD.

**If you have any questions about CPD, please contact the NSW ARB:**

[architects.nsw.gov.au](http://architects.nsw.gov.au)

02 9241 4033

[mail@architects.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@architects.nsw.gov.au)

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