

NSW
Architects Registration Board
L2, 156 Gloucester Street
Sydney NSW 2000

T: +61 2 9241 4033
mail@architects.nsw.gov.au / www.architects.nsw.gov.au
ABN 63-092-097-847

Architects Regulation 2017 Information Sheet BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR CPD PROVIDERS June 2019

Delivering Continuing Professional Development (CPD) services for architects in NSW

The *NSW Architects Code of Professional Conduct* (the Code) Part 5, Section 16 requires that architects must annually demonstrate to the NSW Architects Registration Board (the Board) that they have taken all reasonable steps to maintain and improve the knowledge and skills relevant to their architectural practice and their provision of architectural services.

[Download a copy of the Code here.](#)

Architects are required at their annual renewal of registration to upload a detailed record of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity for the last 12-month period.

In NSW, a one-hour CPD activity is equivalent to one CPD point.

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

[Download a copy of the CPD Policy here.](#)

Planning your CPD offerings

Architects are responsible for self-determining which CPD activities they undertake based on what they consider appropriate to their individual needs. As such they are encouraged to be strategic in how they plan their CPD to ensure that it genuinely relates to and enhances their practice.

The Board does not accredit CPD providers.

All effective CPD programs should have as their basis the *National Competency Standard for Architects* (the Standard), which is available on the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) website.

[Download a copy of the Standard here.](#)

Every year, architects are required to complete CPD activities that relate to a minimum of two of the four Units of Competency from the Standard:

- Design;
- Documentation;
- Project Delivery; and
- Practice Management.

These Units of Competency are further divided into a detailed set of 9 Elements of Competency and 70 Performance Criteria.

CPD activities can be provided in a variety of formats, including face-to-face and online.

To assist architects to strategically develop their knowledge and skills, providers are encouraged to develop CPD content that explores a wide range of relevant Elements of Competency and Performance Criteria from the Standard.

In particular, CPD activities relating to the Practice Management Unit are highly sought after by architects, and the Board's data shows this to be the area requiring the greatest improvement in knowledge and skills within the architecture profession.

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

Providers should note that 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 and 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.

Provider-delivered Formal CPD activities must include:

- Presenters with appropriate academic, technical or practical expertise;
 - and
- Clearly stated learning outcomes that are mapped to relevant Units of Competency / Elements of Competency / Performance Criteria from the Standard;
 - 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 must 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.*
 - or



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- 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.

Informal CPD activities are **not required** to include assessment or significant interaction between the presenter and the participant.

Examples of provider-delivered Informal CPD activities include, but are not limited to:

- Talks and presentations;
- Design lectures and seminars;
- Structured visits to building sites, buildings and exhibitions;
- Conferences. Note that where a conference offers a specific CPD event or a stream of CPD sessions, these may qualify as Formal CPD if the requirements for Formal CPD outlined above are met.

Note that architects are entitled only to claim a maximum of two hours CPD for any one Informal CPD event.

Best practice for providers of Formal CPD

Providers of Formal CPD must:

- Keep records of their program of CPD activities, including date, activity name/description, relevant Unit(s) of Competency covered by the activity, category of activity (ie. Formal or Informal), and number of contact hours for the activity. Records should be kept for a minimum of five years;
- Keep accurate attendance records for every Formal CPD activity they offer. This includes recording participants who arrive late or leave early from the activity. Records should be kept for a minimum of five years;

- Provide in advance of every CPD activity an outline of the learning outcomes mapped to the relevant Units of Competency / Elements of Competency / Performance Criteria from the Standard so that participants can make an informed decision about whether the CPD activity is suited to their learning needs;
- Provide in advance of every CPD activity evidence that the presenter has appropriate academic, technical or practical expertise so that participants can make an informed decision about whether or not to undertake the CPD activity;
- Provide every participant at the conclusion of every CPD activity with a certificate of completion as proof of the participant's attendance. The certificate must include the participant's name and registration number, provider name, date, activity name/description, relevant Unit(s) of Competency covered by the activity, 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. Certificates of completion should not be issued to participants who did not attend the entire activity;
- Provide every participant at the conclusion of every CPD activity with evidence of their completion of a structured assessment task that has genuinely tested participants' understanding of content; **or** evidence that the activity was structured to include significant interaction between the presenter and the participant.

More about the National Standard of Competency for Architects (the Standard)

[Download a copy of the Standard here.](#)

Units of Competency

The activities involved in the practice of architecture are categorised in the Standard into the following four Units of Competency:

Design

An activity involving iterative exploration and appraisal of a range of ideas and concepts, leading towards the development of a coherent proposal for a project. The design process extends from evaluation of project viability to 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 social and environmental considerations.



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Documentation

The process of resolving, detailing and communicating an architectural project through all project stages. Modes of documentation include modelling, drawings, specifications and schedules that can be used in the construction, contract management and handover of the project. Documentation 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 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 the formalisation 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 involves knowledge of project delivery and skills to execute the processes involved in providing architectural services; the knowledge and skills to implement appropriate systems to establish and maintain an architectural practice; and the knowledge and skills to enact the broad range of ethical and legal obligations required of a Professional Practitioner.



If you have any questions as a provider regarding Continuing Professional Development, please contact the NSW Architects Registration Board.

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