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Architects Registration Board
L2, 156 Gloucester Street
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mail@architects.nsw.gov.au / www.architects.nsw.gov.au
ABN 63-092-097-847

Information Sheet - NSW Portfolio Program of Assessment (NSW PPA)

May 2020

Introduction

The NSW Portfolio Program of Assessment (NSW PPA) and National Program of Assessment (NPrA) are two competency based assessment processes that provide pathways to the [Architectural Practice Examination](#) for those who have substantial skills and experience in the architectural services profession but do not have the approved academic qualification in architecture or overseas equivalent.

approved architectural qualification. Eligible candidates will have led the design and delivery of high-quality, complex architectural projects.¹

The NSW PPA should not be regarded as a shortcut to registration as an architect in Australia.

Candidates submit a portfolio of three to four complex architectural projects from the last ten years for which they have been a primary decision maker for the conceptual and schematic design, and design development. At least one of the projects should have been built in Australia in the last ten years, or overseas in the last five years. In addition to the portfolio submission, candidates submit supporting written material and are interviewed about their skills and experience in the architectural services profession.

The sole purpose of the NSW PPA is to grant access to the [Architectural Practice Examination](#), the successful completion of which is required before applying for registration as an architect in Australia. The successful completion of the NSW PPA does not provide a qualification.

Candidate submissions to the NSW PPA are assessed against the relevant Performance Criteria from the [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#)¹ to determine the candidate's equivalence with the threshold competencies expected of a graduate from an accredited architecture program in Australia.

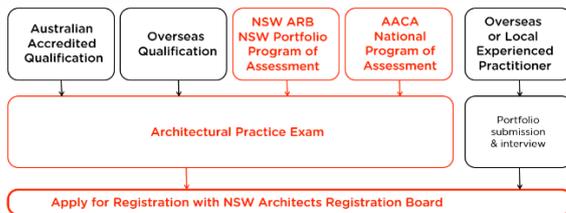


Figure 1: Pathways to registration as an architect in Australia

The **National Program of Assessment (NPrA)** is an 'assessment by project' process and is administered by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA). For more information see <https://www.aaca.org.au/national-program-of-assessment-npra/>

The **NSW Portfolio Program of Assessment (NSW PPA)** is an 'assessment by portfolio' process and is administered by the NSW Architects Registration Board (the 'Board').

The NSW PPA is a challenging registration pathway for exceptional people with exemplary skills and substantial 'Executive' level industry experience¹ in the architectural services profession, but no

¹ Refer pages 15-17 for definitions.



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The 3 stages of the NSW PPA

- **Stage 1** Eligibility Assessment
- **Stage 2** Eligibility Interview
- **Stage 3** Major Portfolio Submission and Interview

Annual timetable

The NSW PPA runs annually. Refer to the Board’s website for the current year’s timetable.

For those who pass Stage 3, applications for the next available Architectural Practice Examination (APE) Part 1 generally open in early February.

Fees

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Stage 1 | \$1,100 |
| Stage 2* | \$500 |
| <i>* Payable at the time of applying for Stage 1. \$450 will be refunded to candidates who are unsuccessful in Stage 1.</i> | |
| Stage 3 | \$3,100 |
| Appeals | \$750 |

Eligibility

The following eligibility requirements apply to the NSW PPA:

a. English language proficiency

If English is not the candidate’s first language, or the candidate did not complete secondary school or tertiary education in English, an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) minimum Band 7 is required in all four abilities of English Language (ie. speaking, listening, reading and writing).

b. Currently resident in Australia

The candidate must currently be resident in Australia.

c. Satisfaction of points criteria

The candidate must score a minimum of one point in any single category, with a total minimum score of 8 points across the four categories listed below. Refer to page 3 for the points table with more detail.

- 1. Australian qualification directly relevant to the architectural services profession**
- 2. Relevant full-time (or equivalent) work experience**
- 3. At least one completed complex architectural project²**
- 4. Executive level experience in the conceptual design, schematic design and detailed design of three to four complex architectural projects²**



² Refer pages 15-17 for definitions.

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Points Criteria

| | | |
|---|--|----------|
| 1. Australian qualification directly relevant to the architectural services profession (maximum 3 points; minimum 1 point) | | points |
| Incomplete accredited architecture qualification (must be at least 90% complete or equivalent to 9 of 10 semesters completed) | | 3 |
| Postgraduate qualification, such as architecture (non-accredited program), architectural science, sustainable built environment, urban design, heritage conservation, etc | | 2 |
| Bachelor qualification, such as architecture, interior architecture, landscape architecture, etc | | 1 |
| Other relevant tertiary qualification at minimum level of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 6 (ie. Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree) | | 1 |
| 2. Relevant full-time (or equivalent) work experience (maximum 3 points; minimum 1 point) | | points |
| 7 years in the last 10 years worked in architectural services, planning, building or other related fields; | 3 years in the last 5 years worked with an architect in an architectural practice in Australia ³ | 3 |
| 10 years in the last 15 years worked in architectural services, planning, building or other related fields; | 3 years in the last 10 years worked with an architect in an architectural practice in Australia ³ | 2 |
| 7 years in the last 10 years in <u>Australia</u> worked in architectural services, planning, building or other related fields; | Completion in the last 2 years of an Australian professional development program - either the Practice of Architecture Learning Series (PALS) or Practising ARCHitecture (PARC) | 1 |
| 3. At least one completed complex architectural project³ (maximum 3 points; minimum 1 point) | | points |
| Built in Australia in the last 5 years | | 3 |
| Built in Australia in the last 10 years | | 2 |
| Built overseas in the last 5 years | | 1 |
| 4. Executive level experience in the conceptual design, schematic design and detailed design of three to four complex architectural projects³ (maximum 3 points; minimum 1 point) | | points |
| In Australia in the last 10 years | | 3 |
| In Australia in the last 15 years | | 2 |
| In the last 15 years, with at least one project in Australia | | 1 |



³ Refer pages 15-17 for definitions.

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Stage 1 Eligibility Assessment

Submission Requirements

Applications for Stage 1 must be submitted by email as a single PDF file to: mail@architects.nsw.gov.au.

Stage 1 submissions will not be assessed unless accompanied by payment of the application fees for both Stage 1 and Stage 2. Once an application has been submitted, the Stage 1 fee is **non-refundable**. A partial refund of the Stage 2 fee will be made to the candidate if they are unsuccessful in Stage 1.

Submissions should comprise the following documents in the order listed below:

1. Completed Application Form (Form 11A) – including completed credit card payment authorisation form and completed submission checklist *and* the following attachments:

- 1a** If English is not the candidate's first language, **documentation in support of their English Language Proficiency**, as instructed at Question 3 of the Application Form.
- 1b** **A copy of the testamur and/or academic transcript for candidate's Australian qualification(s)** that are directly relevant to the architectural services profession, as instructed at Question 5.1 of the Application Form.

2. NSW Statutory Declaration – signed by a Justice of the Peace, lawyer or notary public, and

- declaring that all submitted documents are true and correct records of the candidate's experience in the architectural services profession; and
- declaring the authenticity of the candidate's involvement at an Executive level in the nominated complex architectural projects; and
- attesting to one of the nominated complex architectural projects being a built project completed in Australia in the last ten years or overseas in the last five years.

3. Two written reference – each reference should be a maximum of 2 x A4 pages and include the contact details for the referee. At least one reference must be from a practising architect currently registered in Australia.⁴ References must comment on the candidate's:

- professional capacity to operate to the standard expected of an architect in Australia;
- Eligibility Portfolio prepared specifically for the NSW PPA, noting the complex architectural projects that the referee worked on with the candidate and the candidate's Executive level role;⁴
- professional experience, with specific reference to the relevant Performance Criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects⁵ against which the NSW PPA is assessed.

4. Table of Contents (including page numbers). Contents should include a table indicating on which pages each of the six relevant Performance Criteria are addressed in the Eligibility Portfolio and Statement of Eligibility.

⁴ Refer to pages 15-17 for definitions.



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5. **Summary Curriculum Vitae (CV)** – maximum of 2 x A4 pages linking work experience to the architectural projects in the Eligibility Portfolio.
6. **Eligibility Portfolio** – maximum total of 16 x A3 pages or 4 x A3 pages per project of graphic material that demonstrates the candidate’s involvement in the last ten years as a primary decision maker in the conceptual design, schematic design and design development of three to four complex architectural projects. More detail is provided below.
7. **Statement of Eligibility** – maximum of 2,000 words. The Statement of Eligibility should directly link the work featured in the Eligibility Portfolio to the relevant Performance Criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects,⁵ as detailed below.

Note that the assessors will not undertake a site visit to any of the candidate’s projects and will rely solely on the submitted material and the interview in deciding the outcome of the application.

All submitted materials will be retained by the Board and will not be returned to the candidate.

Eligibility Portfolio

The objective of the Eligibility Portfolio is to provide evidence of the candidate’s fundamental abilities as a conceptual thinker and designer. It will also evidence the candidate’s authorship or co-authorship as a primary decision maker in the last ten years for the conceptual design, schematic design

and detailed design of three to four complex architectural projects,⁵ at least one of which should have been built in Australia in the last ten years, or overseas in the last five years.

In selecting appropriate projects for the Eligibility Portfolio, emphasis should be placed on more recent projects by the candidate, and those completed in the three years with an architect in an architectural practice in Australia.⁵

The Eligibility Portfolio must include three to four complex architectural projects from the last ten years and must not exceed a maximum total of 16 x A3 pages or 4 x A3 pages per project. The candidate must therefore be selective in the material they include.

The candidate is encouraged to submit authentic content originally produced in the course of the actual architectural projects themselves and to supplement this with new content as required to address the six relevant Performance Criteria (3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2).⁵

Include the following information for each project in the Eligibility Portfolio:

- Project name
- Location (street address, suburb/city, state, country)
- Building type (eg. multi-residential apartment building)
- Project value
- Period of candidate’s involvement in the project (provide start and finish dates, month and year)
- Date project construction completed (practical completion), if applicable (month and year)

⁵ Refer to pages 15-17 for definitions.



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- Brief statement outlining the candidate’s role in the project (eg. Project leader, Senior architectural assistant,* etc) and their relationship with the rest of the team, including consultants.

** NOTE: Under Part 2, Division 2 of the Architects Act 2003 (NSW) (the ‘Act’) only an individual whose name is on the Register of Architects in the Australian state(s) and/or territory(ies) in which they work may use the title ‘architect’ or its derivatives to describe the services they offer. The candidate may only refer to themselves as an ‘architectural assistant’, ‘architectural technician’ or ‘architectural drafter’ if they are an employee of an architect, and only for the period that they are an employee of an architect.*

The candidate should note that if they breach Part 2, Division 2 of the Act their application will not be accepted.

The Eligibility Portfolio should demonstrate:

- **original creative thinking;**
- **the architectural proposition and its core principle(s)** throughout the material provided;
- **evolution of design thinking** in response to project requirements;
- **exercise of architectural judgement** in progressing ideas and concepts to a resolved, final architectural solution;
- **appropriate use of graphic techniques** to effectively communicate design intent, structure, construction and materials;
- **the full exploration of design ideas and their resolution** which may be conveyed cumulatively across all projects through a

variety of image types as relevant and appropriate, such as:*

- sketches (not to scale)
- diagrams (not to scale)
- 3-D digital models and photographs of physical models (not to scale)
- site plan(s) as relevant (suggested scale 1:5000 to 1:200)
- selected horizontal section(s) (plans) (suggested scale 1:500 to 1:50)
- selected vertical section(s) (suggested scale 1:200 to 1:20)
- architectural details that make a significant contribution to the technical resolution of the architectural intent and design concept aspirations (suggested scale 1:1 to 1:10)
- other drawings, renders, images, visualisations and photographs that document the project.

** NOTE: the candidate should be selective in the images they include.*

Include a linear scale for all drawings that have been drawn to scale.

Wherever possible, identify where various details occur in the building on the general arrangement drawings.

Where drawings are reduced to suit the A3 folio format, ensure that the drawings and any important dimensions and annotations remain legible.

The candidate should note that the maximum total of 16 x A3 pages or 4 x A3 pages per project page limit for the Eligibility Portfolio is strictly enforced and portfolios that exceed these limits will not be accepted.



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Features of a Strong Eligibility Portfolio

Strong Eligibility Portfolio submissions communicate in a professional and engaging manner by maximising the use of graphic material, rather than relying on wordy responses.

Include a short 'project description' or 'statement of intent' (no more than 250-300 words) for each project.

Include some method for cross-referencing the work in the Eligibility Portfolio with the Statement of Eligibility.

All pages in the portfolio should be numbered.

Strong submissions clearly demonstrate the candidate's ability across the six relevant Performance Criteria. Typically, these are best illustrated in the following capability areas:*

- **undertake iterative explorations and appraisals** of a range of ideas and concepts, leading towards the development of a coherent proposal for a project (PC* 3.2, 5.1);
- **creatively explore** spatial sequencing and hierarchy and three-dimensional architectural form (PC* 3.5, 5.2);
- **develop compelling design concepts** in response to client, user and public requirements, and appropriate social, environmental and contextual considerations (PC* 3.3); and
- **integrate technical requirements** into the resolved design and demonstrate an understanding of

construction and materiality (PC* 4.5).

** NOTE: This mapping of Performance Criteria to capability areas is intended to assist the candidate to visualise how the PCs can be grouped together. The mapping is indicative only and the candidate may wish to develop their own approach in structuring their Eligibility Portfolio and Statement of Eligibility.*

Statement of Eligibility

The objective of the Statement of Eligibility is to demonstrate that the candidate possesses design skills and experience equivalent to the threshold competencies expected of a graduate from an accredited architecture program in Australia.

This is achieved by cross-referencing the candidate's work experience and Eligibility Portfolio of complex architectural projects⁶ to the six relevant Performance Criteria (3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2).⁶

The candidate must demonstrate competency at the highest level of 'A' - 'Application of Knowledge & Skills in architectural practice.'⁶

The Statement must be well considered, precisely expressed, properly composed and appropriately cross-referenced to the Performance Criteria.

In determining the content for their Statement of Eligibility, the candidate should select the project, or projects, from their Eligibility Portfolio that best illustrates the application of the Performance Criteria.



⁶ Refer to pages 15-17 for definitions.

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Strong Statement of Eligibility submissions are able to focus on the development of a single project from the Eligibility Portfolio, demonstrating the application of creative imagination, aesthetic judgement and critical evaluation across all phases of the design process from the formulation of initial design options, to the production of a coherent design and the ultimate resolution of that design.

However, where it is not possible to fully demonstrate competency within a single project, the candidate may select from their Eligibility Portfolio a combination of projects that best illustrates their competency across the relevant Performance Criteria, with the additional projects used to fill gaps and demonstrate depth of skills and experience.

Emphasis should be placed on the last five years immediately preceding the NSW PPA application, and especially the three years' work completed with an architect in an architectural practice in Australia.⁷

Provide a detailed description of the candidate's Executive level⁷ role for each of the project(s) featured in the Statement of Eligibility, including explicit comments about how the candidate has demonstrated achievement of the required Performance Criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects.⁷

The candidate should note that the 2,000 word limit for the Statement of Eligibility is strictly enforced and statements that exceed this limit will not be accepted.

Features of a strong Statement of Eligibility

Strong Statement of Eligibility submissions focus on the development of a single project, if possible. They are explicit about the candidate's skills and experience and present this in a chronological order.

Strong submissions demonstrate the candidate's familiarity with the National Standard of Competency for Architects and their understanding of the intent of the relevant Performance Criteria in establishing competency thresholds.

Strong submissions include a **post-project evaluation of the selected project(s)** and whether their design concepts were realised and how the experience informed the candidate's later work.

Strong submissions clearly demonstrate the candidate's ability across the relevant Performance Criteria. Typically, these are best illustrated in the capability areas as listed previously for the Eligibility Portfolio.

Outcome of Stage 1

The assessment of Stage 1 submissions is undertaken by Board staff and the Registrar, at least one of who is an architect.

At any time during the Stage 1 assessment process, the Registrar may, at their discretion, contact the candidate's supervising architect(s) and/or consultant/builder/client to confirm the accuracy of the submission or to discuss particular elements that require clarification.



⁷ Refer to pages 15-17 for definitions.

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A rating of ‘SATISFACTORY’ is required for all six Performance Criteria to pass Stage 1.

The Board will email the candidate the outcome of their Stage 1 Eligibility Assessment within 2-3 weeks of the finalisation of all assessments.

Successful

Where a candidate is successful, they will be invited to proceed to the NSW PPA Stage 2 Eligibility Interview.

The candidate must complete the Eligibility Interview in the same 12-month period as their Stage 1 application.

Unsuccessful

Unsuccessful candidates will be advised in writing that they have been unsuccessful, and the area/s in which deficiencies have been identified.

Unsuccessful candidates at Stage 1 may reapply for the NSW PPA at any time.

Stage 2 Eligibility Interview

Candidates deemed eligible in the NSW PPA Stage 1 will be invited for a Stage 2 Eligibility Interview.

The objective of the Eligibility Interview is to confirm that the candidate can demonstrate and communicate adequate practical application and experience across the six relevant Performance Criteria (3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2), consistent with their submission for the Stage 1 Eligibility Assessment.

The interview will explore the candidate’s:

- involvement in projects from the Eligibility Portfolio, including the various roles they have played in design teams;
- conceptual approaches and design processes; and
- methods for informed decision-making during the design process.

In the interview, the candidate must demonstrate experience at the highest level of competency ‘A’ - ‘Application of Knowledge & Skills in architectural practice’⁸ in each of the six relevant Performance Criteria.

The Eligibility Interview is not restricted to discussion of the candidate’s Eligibility Portfolio and Statement of Eligibility.

The interview will be 45-60 minutes duration and will be conducted by two assessors. One assessor will be a registered architect and one assessor will be an academic from an accredited architecture program in NSW.

The candidate is not permitted to take any equipment, notes, reference materials, phones, recording or other devices into the interview.

The candidate is not permitted to contact the assessors either before or after the interview.

At the conclusion of the interview, the assessors will decide whether, on balance, the candidate possesses the design skills and experience equivalent to the threshold competencies expected of a



⁸ Refer to pages 15-17 for definitions.

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graduate from an accredited architecture program in Australia.

A rating of ‘SATISFACTORY’ is required for all six Performance Criteria to pass Stage 2.

Outcome of Stage 2

The Board will email the candidate the outcome of their Stage 2 Eligibility Interview within 2-3 weeks of the finalisation of all assessments.

Successful

Where a candidate is successful, they will be invited to proceed to the NSW PPA Stage 3 Major Portfolio Submission and Interview.

The candidate must apply for Stage 3 within two years of the date of the email advising them of their successful completion of Stage 2 of the NSW PPA.

Unsuccessful

Unsuccessful candidates will be advised in writing that they have been unsuccessful, and the area/s in which deficiencies have been identified.

Unsuccessful candidates at Stage 2 must wait two years from the date of the email notifying the result before re-applying for the NSW PPA. Re-applying candidates are required to re-submit for Stage 1 Eligibility.

Stage 3 Major Portfolio Submission and Interview

Candidates who pass the NSW PPA Stage 2 may apply for Stage 3 within two years of the date of the email advising them of their successful completion of Stage 2.

Candidates for Stage 3 will be assessed by two new assessors who are not familiar with the documentation submitted for Stages 1 and 2.

The amount of time necessary to prepare a comprehensive Stage 3 submission should not be underestimated. It is recommended that the candidate seek feedback on their draft submission from architect colleagues and peers to confirm the appropriateness of their submission and to confirm that their experience and skills are clearly demonstrated and communicated in the Major Portfolio Submission.

Submission Requirements

Applications for Stage 3 must be submitted by email as a single PDF file to: mail@architects.nsw.gov.au.

Stage 3 submissions will not be assessed unless accompanied by payment of the application fee. Once an application has been submitted, fees are **non-refundable**.

Submissions should comprise the following documents in the order listed below:

1. **Completed Application Form (Form 11B)** – including completed credit card payment authorisation form and completed submission checklist.
2. **NSW Statutory Declaration** – signed by a Justice of the Peace, lawyer or notary public, and
 - declaring that all submitted documents are true and correct records of the candidate’s experience in the architectural services profession; and
 - declaring the authenticity of the candidate’s involvement at an Executive level in the



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- nominated complex architectural projects; and
- attesting to one of the nominated complex architectural projects being a built project completed in Australia in the last ten years or overseas in the last five years.

3. Table of Contents (including page numbers). Include a table indicating on which pages each of the 20 relevant Performance Criteria are addressed in the Major Portfolio and Stage 3 Report.

4. Summary Curriculum Vitae (CV) – maximum of 2 x A4 pages linking work experience to the architectural projects in the Major Portfolio.

5. Major Portfolio – maximum of 32 x A3 pages of graphic material. It is anticipated that the Major Portfolio will feature the same projects as were included in the Stage 1 Eligibility Portfolio but provide more detail.

6. Stage 3 Report – maximum of 3,500 words. The Report submission should directly link the work featured in the Major Portfolio to the relevant Performance Criteria from the National Standard of Competency for Architects, as detailed below.

Note that the assessors will not undertake a site visit to any of the candidate's projects and will rely solely on the submitted material and the interview in deciding the outcome of the application.

All submitted materials will be retained by the Board and will not be returned to the candidate.

Major Portfolio

The objective of the Major Portfolio is to provide evidence of the candidate's fundamental abilities as a conceptual thinker and designer.

It will also evidence the candidate's authorship or co-authorship as a primary decision maker in the last ten years for the conceptual design, schematic design and detailed design of three to four complex architectural projects,⁹ at least one of which should have been built in Australia in the last ten years, or overseas in the last five years.

It is anticipated that the Major Portfolio will feature the same complex architectural projects as were included in the Stage 1 Eligibility Portfolio but provide more detail. The candidate may reuse some of the pages from their Eligibility Portfolio for the Stage 3 submission, noting that the range of competencies to be demonstrated by the candidate at Stage 3 is much broader (20 Performance Criteria) than for Stage 1 (only six Performance Criteria).

The Major Portfolio must include three to four complex architectural projects from the last ten years and must not exceed 32 x A3 pages. The candidate must therefore be selective in the material they include. The candidate may be flexible in the number of pages they choose to allocate to each project. Some projects may be allocated more pages than others, depending on their significance in demonstrating the satisfaction of the relevant Performance Criteria.⁹

The same considerations as for the Eligibility Portfolio apply (refer pages 5-6), with content as required

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to address the 20 relevant Performance Criteria (1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 9.8).⁹

The candidate should note that the 32 x A3 page limit for the Major Portfolio is strictly enforced and portfolios that exceed this limit will not be accepted.

Features of a Strong Major Portfolio

The same features as for the Eligibility Portfolio apply (refer page 7).

Additionally, strong Major Portfolio submissions demonstrate the candidate's **understanding of the principles of architectural detailing and the role of architectural details in determining architectural aesthetics and realising design intent.**

Strong submissions clearly demonstrate the candidate's ability across the relevant Performance Criteria. Typically, these are best illustrated in the following capability areas:^{*}

- **identify, analyse and integrate relevant information** in the design and documentation of a complex architectural project⁹ (PC* 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2);
- **analyse and evaluate design options** against project requirements, regulatory requirements, industry codes and standards, and social, environmental and contextual considerations (PC* 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.9);
- **develop compelling design concepts** in response to client, user and public requirements, and appropriate social, environmental

and contextual considerations (PC* 3.1, 3.3);

- **apply creative imagination, aesthetic judgement and critical evaluation** to the iterative exploration and appraisal of a range of ideas and concepts, leading towards the development of a coherent proposal for a project (PC* 3.2, 4.3, 5.1);
- **creatively explore** urban context, spatial relationships, sequencing and hierarchy and three-dimensional architectural form (PC* 3.5, 5.2);
- **integrate technical requirements** into the resolved design and demonstrate an understanding of structure, construction systems, materials, and service and transport systems (PC* 4.5, 4.6, 4.7); and
- **communicate clearly and with an appropriate level of detail** with clients and stakeholders using graphic techniques, modelling and written modes (PC* 3.8, 9.8).

** NOTE: This mapping of Performance Criteria to capability areas is intended to assist the candidate to visualise how the PCs can be grouped together. The mapping is indicative only and the candidate may wish to develop their own approach in structuring their Major Portfolio and Report.*



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Stage 3 Report

The objective of the Stage 3 Report is to demonstrate that the candidate possesses skills and experience equivalent to the threshold competencies expected of a graduate from an accredited architecture program in Australia.

This is achieved by cross-referencing the candidate’s Major Portfolio of complex architectural projects to the 20 relevant Performance Criteria (1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 9.8).¹⁰

The candidate must demonstrate competency at the highest level of ‘A’ – ‘Application of Knowledge & Skills in architectural practice.’¹⁰

The same considerations as for the Statement of Eligibility apply (refer pages 7-8).

The candidate should note that the 3,500 word limit for the Report submission is strictly enforced and statements that exceed this limit will not be accepted.

Features of a Strong Stage 3 Report

The same features as for the Statement of Eligibility apply (refer page 8).

Strong submissions clearly demonstrate the candidate’s ability across the 20 relevant Performance Criteria. Typically, these are best illustrated in the capability areas as listed previously for the Major Portfolio.

Assessment of the Major Portfolio and Report

At any time during the Stage 3 assessment process, the Registrar may, at their discretion, contact the candidate’s supervising architect(s) and/or consultant/builder/client to confirm the accuracy of the submission or to discuss particular elements that require clarification.

Two assessors will be appointed to assess the candidate’s Major Portfolio and Report submissions and conduct the Stage 3 Interview. One assessor will be a registered architect and one assessor will be an academic from an accredited architecture program in NSW. The assessors will be different to those allocated for the candidate’s Stage 2 Eligibility Interview.

The assessors will receive a copy of the candidate’s submission and undertake an independent preliminary evaluation prior to the Stage 3 Interview.

The assessors will structure the Stage 3 Interview in response to the Major Portfolio and Report submission.

Stage 3 Interview

The objective of the Stage 3 Interview is to confirm that the candidate can demonstrate and communicate adequate practical application and experience across the 20 relevant Performance Criteria (1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 9.8), consistent with their Major Portfolio and Report submissions.



¹⁰ Refer to pages 15-17 for definitions.

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The interview will explore the candidate's:

- involvement in projects from the Major Portfolio, including the various roles they have played in design teams;
- conceptual approaches and design processes;
- methods for informed decision-making during the design process; and
- technical knowledge.

The Stage 3 Interview is not restricted to discussion of the Candidate's Major Portfolio and Report.

The interview will be 45-60 minutes duration and will be conducted by the two assessors.

The candidate is not permitted to take any equipment, notes, reference materials, phones, recording or other devices into the interview.

The candidate is not permitted to contact the assessors either before or after the interview.

At the conclusion of the interview, the assessors will decide whether, on balance, the candidate possesses the design skills, technical knowledge and experience equivalent to the threshold competencies expected of a graduate from an accredited architecture program in Australia.

A rating of 'SATISFACTORY' is required for at least 16 of the 20 Performance Criteria to pass Stage 3.

Outcome of Stage 3

The Board will email the candidate the outcome of their Stage 3 Major Portfolio Submission and Interview within 2-3 weeks of the finalisation of all assessments.

Successful

Where the candidate is successful, they will be granted access to the next available Architectural Practice Examination (APE) in NSW provided they meet eligibility requirements.

The candidate must apply for the APE within three years of the date of the email advising them of their successful completion of Stage 3 of the NSW PPA.

The APE is conducted twice a year. Successful completion of the APE is required before a candidate can apply for registration.

Unsuccessful

Unsuccessful candidates will be advised in writing that they have been unsuccessful, and the area/s in which deficiencies have been identified.

Unsuccessful candidates at Stage 3 are ineligible to reapply for the NSW PPA.

In exceptional circumstances the assessors may consider that the candidate should be allowed to reapply following the satisfaction of specific conditions intended to address the identified deficiencies. In this situation, the candidate is required to re-submit for Stage 1 and to provide a statement not exceeding 1 x A4 page indicating how they have met the specified conditions.



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Appeals

An appeal may be lodged in writing to the Board within 28 days from the date of the notification of the result of any stage. A fee applies.

Causes of appeal external to the Portfolio Program of Assessment will not normally constitute acceptable grounds for appeal. For example, insufficient time due to personal or other reasons is not considered a valid reason for appealing the outcome of the assessment.

The appeal is not an opportunity to submit further material that should have been included in the original submission, or to submit entirely new materials.

The submission of solicited testimonials from practising architects or others on the candidate's behalf will not be considered in an appeal.

architectural services by the corporation or firm.

'Executive' level experience

Executive level experience is defined by the AACA as being gained when a candidate is a decision maker on a project. An executive role may include reporting back to the director or other senior staff members, especially in larger firms.

Other levels of experience defined by the AACA are 'Participant' or 'Observer' level. 'Participant' level experience is gained when a candidate is an active team member carrying out project related work under the instruction or supervision of an architect or other responsible person. 'Observer' level experience is gained when a candidate observes project procedures and practices carried out by others.

Neither 'Participant' or 'Observer' levels of experience qualify for the NSW PPA.

Definitions**Architect**

Only an individual whose name is on the Register of Architects in the Australian state(s) and/or territory(ies) in which they work may use the title 'architect' or its derivatives to describe the services they offer. The NSW Register of Architects can be searched from the homepage of the Board's website at www.architects.nsw.gov.au under the 'Search Register' field.

Architectural practice

In NSW, an architectural practice may be a sole trader who is a registered architect; or a corporation or firm that has at least one nominated architect who is responsible for the provision of

Complex architectural project

A complex architectural project is defined by the AACA as a project of medium scale or larger that requires the skill and knowledge to deliver the resolution and integration of complicated aspects including but not limited to siting, planning, structure, services, materials, composition and configuration. A complex project is demanding in its ordering and organisation of multiple occupancy and/or special purpose user requirements and requires the integration of cultural, social, environmental and technical issues.

Generally, single dwelling residential projects would not be considered a complex project.

For smaller scale projects that do not meet the definition of a complex architectural project, the candidate



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must include a rationale as to why the particular project should be considered complex.

National Standard of Competency for Architects

The AACA's [National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) is the overarching document establishing the standard for the assessment of architectural education and professional competency prior to registration as an architect in Australia. It comprises four Units of Competency including Design, Documentation, Project Delivery and Practice Management, and 70 individual Performance Criteria.

Application of Knowledge & Skills in architectural practice

'Application of Knowledge & Skills in architectural practice' is defined by the AACA as the ability to demonstrate autonomy and expert judgement through the creative synthesis of knowledge and application of skills to unique and complex situations.

The other two levels of competency defined by the AACA are 'K' - 'Knowledge acquisition' and 'S' - 'Skills acquisition'.

'Knowledge acquisition' is the ability to retrieve, recognise and recall relevant information and to grasp the meaning of material through interpreting, summarising, and explaining.

'Skills acquisition' is the ability to perform discrete activities and make judgements in new and concrete situations informed by disciplinary knowledge including the use of methods, techniques and technologies, concepts, principles, laws and theories.

Neither 'Knowledge acquisition' or 'Skills acquisition' levels of

competency qualify for the NSW PPA.

Relevant Performance Criteria

The six Performance Criteria listed below in bold text are tested across all stages of the NSW PPA. An additional 14 Performance Criteria are tested at Stage 3.

- 1. Design: Project Briefing**
- 1.2 Establishment, analysis and evaluation of client project requirements and objectives.*
- 1.4 Identification of factors that may impact on client project requirements and objectives.*
- 2. Design: Pre-Design**
- 2.1 Identification, analysis and integration of information relevant to siting of project.*
- 2.2 Application of principles controlling planning, development and design for the project site.*
- 3. Design: Conceptual Design**
- 3.1 Design response integrates the objectives of brief, user intent and built purpose.*
- 3.2 Application of creative imagination, aesthetic judgement and critical evaluation in formulating design options.**
- 3.3 Design response incorporates assessment of the physical location and relevant wider regional, contextual and environmental issues.**
- 3.4 Design response incorporates assessment of relevant legislation, codes and industry standards.*
- 3.5 Exploration and application of ordering, sequencing and modelling of three-dimensional form and spatial content.**



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3.8 *Application of manual and digital graphic techniques and modelling to describe three-dimensional form and spatial relationships.*

4. Design: Schematic Design

4.1 *Evaluation of design options in relation to project requirements.*

4.2 *Evaluation of design options against values of physical, environmental and cultural contexts.*

4.3 *Application of creative imagination and aesthetic judgement to produce coherent design.*

4.5 Investigation and integration of appropriate structural, construction, service and transport systems in the project design.

4.6 *Investigation and integration of appropriate material selection for the project design.*

4.7 *Coordination and integration of appropriate environmental systems, including for thermal comfort, lighting and acoustics.*

4.9 *Analysis of schematic design in regard to cost planning and timeframe to comply with client and project requirements.*

5. Documentation: Detailed Design

5.1 Application of creative imagination and aesthetic judgement in producing a resolved project design in regard to site planning, physical composition and spatial planning as appropriate to the project brief.

5.2 Resolution of project design addressing all building occupancy and functional aspects including spatial requirements and relationships and circulation aspects.

9. Practice Management

9.8 *Clear and consistent communication with client and relevant stakeholders throughout project.*

Registration as an Architect

Successful completion of the Architectural Practice Examination (APE) is required before the candidate can apply for registration.

Candidates for the NSW PPA may log their experience in architectural practice gained prior to the successful completion of the NSW PPA for the purposes of meeting the eligibility requirements for the APE. The APE requires candidates to log a minimum 3300 hours across 15 mandatory performance criteria.

Further information about the APE is available on the AACA website at: <https://www.aaca.org.au/architectural-practice-examination/>

Further Information

For further information, visit the website or contact the Registrar, Dr Kirsten Orr:

www.architects.nsw.gov.au

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