

NSW ARB Policy

ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE EXAMINATION REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that candidates undertaking the Architectural Practice Examination (APE) have equitable access to assessment, consistent with the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth), the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#), and relevant best practice in education.

Reasonable adjustments allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and professional competence without being disadvantaged by a health condition, disability, or temporary circumstance.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all candidates undertaking the APE.

2. Principles

The NSW Architects Registration Board (NSW ARB) is committed to:

- **Equity and fairness:** No candidate should be disadvantaged because of disability, illness, or other valid condition.
- **Integrity of assessment:** Adjustments must not compromise the inherent requirements of the assessment or the standard of competence being measured.
- **Transparency and consistency:** Processes for requesting and granting adjustments are published, applied consistently, and subject to review.
- **Compliance with legislation:** This policy aligns with the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth), the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#), and relevant Australian best practice in education.

3. Definitions

- **Reasonable adjustments:** Any modification or support put in place to enable a candidate to undertake an assessment on an equitable basis, without altering the learning or competency outcomes being measured.
- **Disability:** As defined by the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (Cth), including physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, or learning disabilities, as well as physical disfigurement and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.
- **Temporary circumstance:** A short-term impairment or circumstance (e.g., broken arm, pregnancy or post pregnancy, acute illness) that may impact exam performance.

4. Privacy and health information

The NSW ARB does not retain or store detailed medical or health information.

We will confirm the approved reasonable adjustments directly with the candidate and will notify the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) of the specific adjustments to be implemented. The NSW ARB will only advise the AACA whether reasonable adjustments are required and will not disclose any of the candidate's medical or personal health information.

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5. Reasonable adjustments matrix

Category of condition	Examples of evidence required	Adjustment options (with maximum limit)	Notes
Specific learning differences (eg dyslexia, ADHD, dysgraphia)	Educational psychologist report or medical certificate	- Extra time – max. 15 minutes per hour of exam / interview - Rest breaks – up to 10 minutes per exam hour (APE Part 2 National Examination Paper (NEP))	Use only where functional impact on reading/writing is documented.
Anxiety / mental health conditions	Psychologist, psychiatrist, or GP report	- Extra time – max. 15 minutes per hour of exam / interview - Rest breaks – max. 10 minutes per hour (NEP / interview) - Reduced distraction or separate environment - Flexible scheduling (eg morning / afternoon)	Adjustments aim to reduce environmental stress, not alter exam standards.
Vision impairment	Ophthalmologist / optometrist certificate	- Extra time – max. 15 minutes for the NEP - Alternative formats (eg large print, accessible digital) - Assistive technology (eg magnifier) - Adjusted lighting / seating - Larger monitor	May require advance preparation of accessible materials.
Hearing impairment	Audiologist certificate	- Alternative communication (eg captions, written prompts) - Quiet/separate room - Assistive listening devices - Extended interview – max. 15 minutes additional time per hour	Interpreter may be provided if required, but no content coaching is permitted.
Mobility / physical disability	Medical certificate or specialist report	- Accessible venue or online mode - Extra time – max. 15 minutes for the NEP if the condition negatively impacts writing / typing - Rest breaks – up to 10 minutes per exam hour	Ensure venue compliance with accessibility requirements.
Chronic illness / fatigue conditions	Recent medical certificate	- Rest breaks – max. 10 minutes per hour (NEP / interview) - Extra time – max. 15 minutes per hour of exam / interview - Flexible scheduling (eg time of day)	Adjustments must balance candidate needs with operational feasibility.
Temporary conditions (eg broken arm, pregnancy-related (including post pregnancy requirements), post-surgery)	Medical certificate	- Use of scribe / typist - Ergonomic adjustments - Extra time – max. 15 minutes per hour of exam / interview - Rest breaks – up to 10 minutes per exam hour	Evidence should state expected duration; applied for relevant session only.

6. Exclusions

To maintain assessment integrity the following are not permitted:

- Changes to interview content, scope, or assessment criteria.
- Written materials to be taken into the examination or interview room.
- Provision of coaching or advocacy during the exam or interview.
- Use of technology outside approved systems (eg artificial intelligence).
- Unlimited or uncapped time extensions.
- Presence of third parties (other than approved invigilators where specifically required).

7. Application process

1. Submission of request

- Candidates must complete a *Reasonable Adjustments Form for Registered Medical/Health Practitioners* available on the NSW ARB website here:
https://www.architects.nsw.gov.au/download/NSW_ARB_Reasonable_Adjustment_Form_for_Registered_Medical_Health_Practitioners_-_June_2026.pdf
- Requests should be made at the time of submitting their application for the relevant part of the APE, whether Parts 1 & 2, Part 2, or Part 3.
- Where a candidate's circumstances change between parts of the APE a request for reasonable adjustments may be submitted
 - 6 weeks prior to the scheduled APE Part 2 National Examination Paper (NEP), and
 - 2 weeks prior to the APE Part 3 Examination by Interview.
- Late requests for reasonable adjustments will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

2. Supporting evidence

- A current medical certificate, psychologist report, or equivalent documentation is required.
- Supporting evidence must:
 - be dated within the past 2 years (unless the condition is permanent)
 - include the nature of the condition and its functional impact on assessment performance, and
 - recommend specific reasonable adjustments, where appropriate.

3. Review and decision

- The NSW ARB will review the supporting evidence and determine whether reasonable adjustments are appropriate.
- Decisions will be made utilising the Reasonable Adjustments Matrix based on fairness, evidence, and operational feasibility.

4. Notification

- The NSW ARB will notify the candidate in writing of the decision at least 2 weeks before the relevant part of the APE.
- The NSW ARB will notify the AACA to confirm the reasonable adjustments decision, including:
 - Candidate ID
 - the specific reasonable adjustments approved from the Matrix (the candidate's medical or personal health information will not be disclosed to the AACA), and
 - where reasonable adjustments cannot be accommodated, the reasons will be explained, and alternatives explored.

- The AACA will confirm receipt and the action implemented to meet the request for reasonable adjustments.

8. Confidentiality

The NSW will treat as confidential all information provided by candidates and will use it solely for the purpose of determining and implementing reasonable adjustments.

- Detailed health information must not be provided to the AACA.
- The AACA receives only operational information necessary to administer / implement reasonable adjustments.
- Any medical information accidentally supplied by the candidate will not be retained by the NSW ARB.
- All arrangements for reasonable adjustments will be handled confidentially and in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth) and [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#) (NSW) (PPIP Act).

9. APE complaints process

A candidate who is affected by a decision about reasonable adjustments may make a complaint by following the process outlined in the [Architectural Practice Examination Candidate Handbook](#).

10. Responsibilities

- Candidates – Submit a request for reasonable adjustments to the NSW ARB within required timeframes.
- NSW ARB – Review the supporting evidence, decide reasonable adjustments, and notify the candidate and the AACA.
- AACA – Implement approved reasonable adjustments and ensure national consistency.

11. Monitoring and review

- The AACA will maintain an internal register of reasonable adjustments implemented for the APE Part 2 National Examination Paper (NEP) and will report to the architect registration boards annually for consistency and quality assurance.
- This policy will be reviewed every 3 years (or earlier if required by legislative or regulatory change).

Next review of policy due June 2029

Disclaimer

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