

Frequently Asked Questions

Continuing Professional Development for Architects

Info Sheet.07

Architects Board of Western Australia

11 July 2019

When using CPD to meet the knowledge, skill and competence requirement for registration as an architect, it is important to ensure that you undertake CPD that is right for you and your business. The Board therefore suggests that every architect should:

- Assess his/her CPD needs regularly, or at least annually;
- Identify appropriate CPD activities to meet his/her needs;
- Plan CPD activities in advance;
- Undertake the learning, and record the activity in sufficient detail;
- Evaluate how CPD undertaken to date has assisted and reflect on what else might be helpful; and
- Implement the knowledge gained from CPD into practice.

In order to assist you in the CPD process, the Board has provided some answers to frequently asked question below.

Why has the Board's CPD Framework been changed?

The CPD Framework was established by the Board in 2009 as a means for the Board to discharge its consumer protection duty to ensure that architects maintain their level of knowledge, skill and competence in the practice of architecture, as required by section 36(2)(a)(iii) of the *Architects Act 2004* (Act).

In order to reinforce the importance of ongoing CPD, the Board considered that a closer alignment between the CPD Framework and areas of core competencies for architects, as outlined in the National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA), needed to be established. Further, the Board decided to provide greater clarity and simplicity to its CPD Framework by eliminating the distinction between "Formal" or "Informal" CPD activities (see below).

The Board has also recently reviewed its process for restoration to the Practising Division of the register and a review of the CPD Framework was an essential part of this process, to ensure consistency.

Do I still need to distinguish between "Formal" and "Informal" CPD activities?

There is no longer a distinction between "Formal" and "Informal" CPD activities.

The key is to ensure that at least 12 of the 20 required CPD points are acquired in the appropriate categories which are referred to as "Core Competency Areas" (see below). The Board considers it important to focus first on the area of learning, and then on the form of learning.

What are the Core Competency Areas?

The "**Core Competency Areas**" are drawn directly from the NSCA produced by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia. These can be downloaded from the website www.aaca.org.au.

The NSCA establishes the standard for architectural education and assessment of professional competency prior to registration as an architect in Australia. The NSCA also describes what is reasonably expected of a person who can demonstrate the standard of skill, care and diligence widely accepted in Australia as a competent professional architectural practitioner.

The NSCA consists of 4 broad units of competency, being Design, Documentation, Practice Management and Project Management. These are the 4 Core Competency Areas for the purpose of the Board's CPD Framework.

What is a CPD point?

A CPD point equates to approximately 1 hour of CPD activity.

If your CPD activity runs for less than an hour, then reasonable discretion will be exercised by the Board. As a rule of thumb, a 45-minute session would most likely be considered to equate to 1 CPD point, while a 40-minute session would most likely be considered to satisfy half a CPD point.

How many CPD points do I need to achieve each year?

The total number of CPD points required each year remains unchanged – **20 CPD points** for the CPD year (which equates to approximately 20 hours of activity).

Of the 20 points required, 12 must be "**Core Points**" relating to the Core Competency Areas (across a minimum of 2 of the Core Competency Areas).

In other words, **a minimum of 12 CPD points must be obtained in at least 2 of the 4 Core Competency Areas**, being:

- Design
- Documentation
- Practice Management
- Project Management

The remaining 8 CPD points, or "**Non-Core Points**", can be obtained in any area of interest, as long as it relates to practice as an architect and is additional to activities already undertaken in the normal course of an architect's practice or employment.

Architects are encouraged to undertake, and record, more than the minimum CPD activities required to comply with the Board's CPD Framework.



Does the CPD year align with the calendar year, financial year or something else?

The CPD year aligns with the financial year. There has been no change in this regard.

Can I get any CPD points for mentoring a graduate/less experienced architect?

You can achieve up to a maximum of 5 CPD points for mentoring, where you are acting as a mentor in a formal program (and your mentee is an architect or architectural graduate).

The Australian Institute of Architects mentoring program is an example of a formal program which would facilitate the achievement of 5 CPD points.

A mentoring program which runs within an office may also qualify as a formal mentoring program, but only where the program structure is documented sufficiently, with clearly stated goals and objectives.

As long as the mentoring occurs within a formal program and is well evidenced and documented, the points can count as "Core Points".

Can I claim CPD points for completing online activities?

Yes. Note that if you wish to claim "Core Points" for online activities, those activities must satisfy the requirements for "Core Points" set out in the Board's "Information Sheet 02 – Continuing Professional Development Framework".

Can I claim CPD points for completing activities overseas?

Yes. CPD activities that are completed whilst you are overseas may still count as CPD for the purposes of the Board's CPD Framework provided that the activity satisfies the various requirements outlined in the Board's "Information Sheet 02 – Continuing Professional Development Framework".

How do I record my CPD activities?

The Board provides a template (CPD Record Form 09) to assist you in recording your CPD activities which can be found on the Board's website. This is the preferred method by which an architect should record his/her CPD activities, but it is not mandatory.

If you choose not to use the Board's CPD Record Form then, when recording your CPD activities, you should ensure that the Core Competency Areas are clearly identified.

What records of CPD activities should I keep?

For CPD points obtained in the 4 Core Competency Areas, it is necessary for an architect to retain both sufficient evidence of undertaking the activity and documentation of the learning outcomes. These records do not need to be submitted at the time of registration renewal, but should be maintained in case an architect is audited.

Evidence of undertaking the CPD activity can take many forms, including:

- A certificate of attendance (where the CPD provider issues such a certificate);
- A receipt for payment (for CPD activities that incur a cost);
- A copy of an article published in a trade/professional magazine; or
- Evidence of travel (where the CPD activity is based on a study tour).

In relation to other types of CPD activity, the Board will exercise appropriate and reasonable discretion in assessing evidence that the activity has been undertaken.

Documentation of learning outcomes can also take many forms, such as:

- Published learning outcomes (these may form part of the material issued by the CPD provider promoting the activity);
- Handouts provided at the time of the activity;
- Assessments completed during the activity; or
- A summary prepared by the architect following completion of the activity.

For all other CPD activities, you must be able to demonstrate how you have achieved the CPD points claimed. This will obviously depend on the nature of the CPD activity and is therefore only something that can be determined on a case by case basis. Any reasonable evidence to show your compliance will be accepted.

Note that if you are selected for an audit of your CPD, you will need to provide the above-mentioned evidence and documentation to the Board.

CPD Audit - what has changed?

Previously, if selected for a CPD audit, you were advised of your selection in the audit 3 months before the end of the CPD year. It has come to the Board's attention that the previous timing of this audit notice resulted in some architects postponing CPD activities unless and until they were notified of an audit (notwithstanding that it is a requirement that an architect disclose compliance/non-compliance with CPD obligations at the time of registration renewal).

The Board seeks to encourage ongoing, and regular, CPD throughout the year and considers that changing the timing of notice of a CPD audit should not impact significantly on the majority of architects who are complying with their CPD obligations on a regular basis throughout the year.

Accordingly, from 1 July 2019, if you are audited you will not receive notice of your audit until after the expiry of the CPD year.

Reinstatement to the Practising Division of the Register – what has changed?

The process for reinstatement is explained in the Board's "Pathways for Reinstatement to the Practising Division of the Register" document which can be found on the Board's website.

If you have been out of the Practising Division for less than 3 years, then you can be reinstated without any need to show evidence of CPD activities



I am looking to take some time away from the practice of architecture but am currently on the Practising Division of the Register. What should I do?

If you are planning a period of absence from the practice of architecture (eg: you are taking time for parental leave/care etc...), you have the option of transferring to the Non-Practising Division of the Register or, alternatively, resigning from the Register. You are able to be reinstated to the Practising Division of the Register in the future (subject to satisfying the relevant obligations outlined in the question above) no matter which option you choose however, in both instances, you need to inform the Board of your plans.

If you choose to transfer to the Non-Practising Division, you will still be required to pay a reduced annual registration fee but your name will remain on the Register and you will not be required to undertake CPD activities or maintain Professional Indemnity Insurance during your absence from the Practising Division.

If you wish to resign from the Register during your absence from the practice of architecture, your name will be removed from the Register and you will not be liable for registration fees during your absence. However, it is important that you actively inform the Board of your intention to resign rather than simply letting your registration lapse by not paying your renewal fees. If you let your registration lapse, the Board will remove your name from the Register for non-payment of fees. In this event, if and/or when you wish to restore your name to the Register you will, pursuant to section 37(2) of the Act, be liable for all fees in arrear (including registration fees and a restoration fee) that would have been due had you continued to be registered during your absence.