

### Introduction

In Western Australia, the *Architects Act 2004* (Act) requires that any person carrying out the practice of architecture under the title of "architect" is to be registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (Board).

In order to become registered in Western Australia (WA) a person must:

- (a) either—
  - (i) hold a qualification obtained as a result of the successful completion of an architectural education course that has been accredited by the Board;
  - (ii) hold a qualification that in the opinion of the Board is equivalent to an accredited course; or
  - (iii) have otherwise attained a standard in relation to the practice of architecture that is acceptable to the Board;
- (b) have been assessed as eligible to sit, and passed, the Architectural Practice Examination;
- (c) have not been convicted of an offence, whether in WA or elsewhere, the nature of which renders the person unfit to be a registered person; and
- (d) otherwise be a fit and proper person (see Regulation 12 of the *Architects Regulations 2005* (Regulations)).

### Architects Accreditation Council of Australia

The Act allows for the Board to have regard to the advice of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) in relation to persons who have either obtained a qualification in a place other than in WA or who do not have a professional qualification.

The AACA is the national organisation constituted by nominees from each of the State and Territory Registration Boards in Australia. It is responsible for establishing, coordinating and advocating national standards for architects in Australia, and for the recognition of Australian architects overseas by relevant registration authorities.

The AACA is not a registration authority but refers its recommendations to the Registration Board.

### Pathways to Registration

In WA, there are five pathways to registration:

1. professional qualification from an accredited course;
2. professional qualification from overseas;
3. automatic mutual recognition or mutual recognition;
4. experienced practitioner assessment for overseas or locally experienced practitioners; and
5. an alternative route for those with experience but no professional qualification.

The appropriate pathway for an applicant depends on whether the applicant possesses a professional qualification in architecture (and, if so, whether the professional qualification is from an accredited course) and/or whether the applicant is already registered in another Australian jurisdiction or in New Zealand. A summary of the five pathways to registration is set out below (see numbered paragraphs 1-5 below).

#### 1. Professional Qualification from an Accredited Course

A national system of accreditation has been adopted by all registration authorities in Australia to ensure that the standard of graduates is acceptable to registration authorities. When assessment for accreditation of any course is requested, an Accreditation Review Panel (ARP) composed of practicing architects and academics is convened. The ARP makes a recommendation to the Board as to whether, and for how long, a course should be accredited. The default period for accreditation is five years and each course is subject to annual reporting throughout the accreditation period.

Currently, the Board has accredited the following Western Australian courses:

- Master of Architecture, Curtin University of Technology;
- Master of Architecture, Curtin University of Technology (delivered on-line through Open Universities Australia);
- Master of Architecture, University of Notre Dame; and
- Master of Architecture, University of Western Australia.

As a national system of accreditation is used throughout Australia, and under licence in New Zealand, courses that have been accredited under the relevant registration authority or recognised by the AACA are equivalent to a qualification accredited by the Board. A list of accredited Australian



architectural qualifications is published on the AACA website ([www.aaca.org.au](http://www.aaca.org.au)).

Applicants with a professional qualification from an accredited course must successfully complete the Architectural Practice Examination (APE) before being eligible for registration by the Board (see below).

## 2. Professional Qualification from Overseas

The Board's preferred method of establishing academic equivalence of qualifications obtained overseas (excluding New Zealand) is through an Overseas Qualification Assessment (OQA) process which comprises two stages. An OQA is conducted by the AACA recognised in all Australian jurisdictions.

### a. OQA Stage One - Provisional Assessment

The provisional assessment of overseas qualifications is conducted by AACA. In forming an opinion on the status of an academic qualification in terms of equivalency with Australian qualifications, the AACA considers a range of factors including the education system of the country concerned, the awarding institution and the level, structure, length and content of the program of study undertaken.

Many intending migrants to Australia may receive provisional assessment of their qualifications from the AACA as part of the evaluation of their migration application. While the provisional assessment is **not** sufficient for registration purposes, a provisional assessment by the AACA must be obtained before an applicant is eligible to undertake the OQA.

Application forms for a Provisional Assessment may be obtained directly from the AACA.

### b. OQA Stage Two – Portfolio Submission & Interview

Stage Two of the OQA involves the assessment of overseas academic qualifications through an interview process, in which the interviewers examine in detail the content of the course leading to the qualification to determine the extent to which it delivers the required competencies. The required competencies are listed in the National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA) and form the basis for accreditation of Australian courses as well as the assessment of overseas qualifications. The NSCA can be downloaded from the AACA website ([www.aaca.org.au](http://www.aaca.org.au)).

The OQA Stage Two process is undertaken in two parts: first an evaluation of the course of study made by the AACA and, secondly, an interview with an OQA panel, comprising two assessors.

The outcome of an OQA is a recommendation to the Board by the AACA as to the equivalence, or not, of a qualification. The Board will consider the AACA's recommendation when making its decision about equivalence.

Application forms for an OQA may be obtained directly from the AACA.

### c. Equivalence of Qualifications

Upon completion of an OQA, an applicant for registration is invited to apply to the Board for a decision on the equivalence of their qualifications. The appropriate form is **Form 10 – Equivalence of Qualifications** (which can be downloaded from the Board's website).

When the advice of AACA (following an OQA) is that an applicant's architectural qualifications are equivalent to an accredited architectural education course, the Board will regard the applicant's qualification as being equivalent (ie: as having satisfied the requirements of Regulation 12(a)(ii) of the Regulations).

### d. Architectural Practice Examination

Once the Board has determined that an applicant's qualification is equivalent to an accredited course, the APE must be successfully completed before the applicant is eligible for registration by the Board (see below).

## 3. Automatic Mutual Recognition or Mutual Recognition

Applicants who are already registered in another Australian State or Territory, or in New Zealand, are able to register in Western Australia under either automatic mutual recognition (AMR) or mutual recognition.

AMR allows individual architects to use their "home" State registration to work in participating Australian States and Territories without needing to apply for registration, or pay registration fees, in the second or "host" State/Territory. Your "home" State is defined as the State/Territory that is your principal place of residence or principal place of work. If these are two different places, you are able to nominate which one shall be your "home" State.

Only architects registered in Australia, and whose "home" State/Territory has adopted AMR can use AMR – an architect registered in NZ or other countries will not be able to rely on their registration from their country of origin to use AMR. Similarly, an architect from a State/Territory that has not adopted AMR will not be entitled to use AMR. QLD is the only Australian jurisdiction that has not adopted AMR.

Eligibility for the AMR scheme also requires that architects have permanent residence outside of WA.

To apply for registration under AMR, an applicant should complete **Form 14 – Notice of Intention to Practice in Western Australia under Automatic Mutual Recognition** (which can be downloaded from the Board's website).

If you are currently registered in QLD or New Zealand and wish to apply for registration as an architect in WA, please use **Form 02 – Application for Registration in WA under Mutual Recognition** which is available from the Board's website.

## 4. Experienced Practitioner Assessment for Overseas or Locally Experienced Practitioners

The Experienced Practitioner Assessment (EPA) process allows both overseas and local (ie: Australian) practitioners who successfully complete the EPA process to bypass the APE and apply directly for registration with their State or Territory Registration Board. It should be noted that candidates who undertake the EPA process and wish to become registered in WA must first register in another jurisdiction and then apply for registration in WA under mutual recognition (see numbered paragraph 3 above).

Applicants must demonstrate an applied understanding of the required performance criteria from the NSCA. Through a portfolio of complex projects, applicants are required to demonstrate appropriate experience and practice of architecture at an “Executive” level (ie: as the principal decision maker), as well as the capacity to exercise professional skill as an architectural practitioner in Australia.

Applicants must submit a professional portfolio of four to six complex built-work projects, a curriculum vitae, two professional references and a mapping of their project work to the performance criteria of the NSCA.

An assessment of each application is then conducted by an administrative review for eligibility verification (by the AACA) and then a face-to-face panel-based competency assessment interview conducted by two assessors.

To qualify for the EPA process, an applicant must be resident in Australia, must hold a minimum five-year professional qualification in architecture and must have had seven years relevant professional post-graduate experience and 12 months relevant professional experience.

Further information on the EPA process, and the application forms, can be found on the AACA’s website.

## 5. No Professional Qualification

The Board’s preferred method of establishing whether an applicant who does not have a professional qualification has attained an acceptable standard in the practice of architecture is through the National Program of Assessment (NPrA) process conducted by the AACA, which is recognised in all Australian jurisdictions.

The NPrA assesses an applicant’s qualifications using a competency-based assessment. The required competencies listed in the NSCA form the basis for accreditation of Australian courses as well as the assessment of overseas qualifications. The NSCA can be downloaded from the AACA website ([www.aaca.org.au](http://www.aaca.org.au)).

The NPrA is conducted annually. Applicants are required to have had a minimum of seven years’ work experience in the last 10 years in architecture, planning, building or other related fields, three years of which must have been in an architect’s office. Applicants who are accepted into the program are required to complete a complex architectural project in the form of a report and companion drawings. The submission is to be

carried out within six months from the commencement date of the program and involves a substantial time commitment.

Interested applicants for the NPrA should contact the AACA directly or visit the AACA website ([www.aaca.org.au](http://www.aaca.org.au)).

### Acceptance of Standard of Practice

Upon completion of the NPrA, applicants for registration are invited to apply to the Board for a decision on the acceptance of their standard in the practice of architecture. The appropriate form is **Form 20 – Acceptance of Standard of Practice** (which can be downloaded from the Board’s website).

When the advice of AACA (following the NPrA process) is that an applicant has fulfilled the requirements of the NPrA, the Board will regard the applicant as having attained an acceptable standard in relation to the practice of architecture (ie: as having satisfied the requirements of Regulation 12(a)(iii) of the Regulations).

Once the Board has determined that an applicant’s standard of practice is acceptable, the APE must be successfully completed before an applicant is eligible for registration by the Board (see below).

## Architectural Practice Examination (APE)

In addition to holding an approved qualification or having an acceptable standard in the practice of architecture, an applicant must have had at least two years practical experience, have passed the APE and applied successfully to the Board to become registered before being able to use the title “architect”.

The APE is conducted in WA twice a year (April/June and September/November), and is the final qualification required for registration in each of the States and Territories of Australia.

The APE is conducted in three parts:

Part 1: Eligibility - Examination of Logbook and Statement of Practical Experience;

Part 2: National Examination Paper; and

Part 3: Examination by Interview.

### Briefing Sessions

Briefing sessions to assist candidates to prepare for the APE are conducted by the Board twice during the year. Dates for the briefing sessions are published on the Board’s website. Bookings are essential, so please contact the Board for further information and/or to make a booking.

### Part 1: Eligibility – Logbook and Statement of Experience

Candidates are required to record a minimum of 3,300 hours (about two years) of practical experience against 35 specific performance criteria and to submit a Statement of Practical Experience.

It is a requirement of the examination that practical experience be logged in the AACA Logbook. An electronic logbook is available free of charge from both the Board’s website and the AACA’s website.

## **Part 2: National Examination Paper**

The National Examination Paper is a one-hour, closed book, multiple choice examination conducted by remote proctoring. A sample examination paper is available on the AACA website ([www.aaca.org.au](http://www.aaca.org.au)).

## **Part 3: Examination by Interview**

The examination by interview is conducted by two Board examiners who are experienced practitioners. The interview will take approximately one hour.

## **More Information**

More information about the Architectural Practice Examination can be found on the Board's website.

**Information Sheet 11 - Logbook Submission Instructions** can be downloaded from the Board's website. **Form 12 – APE Parts 1 & 2** is to be used to apply for Parts 1 & 2 of the APE.

Further information can also be found on the AACA website.

## **Application for Registration**

Upon successful completion of the APE, an applicant is invited to apply to the Board for registration. This involves completing the application form (including providing the required supporting documentation) and payment of the application and registration fees. **Form 01 – Application for Registration** is available from the Board's website.

## **Financial Assistance**

In certain circumstances, financial assistance may be available to overseas-trained applicants to cover the cost of undertaking an OQA or the APE. Information can be obtained from the Australian Government's Australian International Education website ([www.internationaleducation.gov.au](http://www.internationaleducation.gov.au)).

## **Contact Details**

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