

NSW
Architects Registration Board
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NSW ARB Policy

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

August 2019

NSW Architects Code of Professional Conduct

The *NSW Architects Code of Professional Conduct* (the Code) requires architects to undertake appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Part 5, Section 16 of the Code requires that architects must annually demonstrate to the Board that they have taken all reasonable steps to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills relevant to their architectural practice and their provision of architectural services.

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

The intention of CPD is that all architects continue to improve their knowledge and skills and maintain currency in their understanding of codes, standards, design, documentation, project delivery and practice management, as relevant to their architectural practice and their provision of competent architectural services.

Framework for CPD

CPD activities should:

- Relate to practice as an architect;
- Be educational in nature; and
- Be additional to activities already undertaken in the normal course of the architect's practice or employment.

Architects should undertake a minimum of 20 hours of CPD each year. Hours cannot be 'rolled over' from one year to the next.

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

The minimum commitment of 20 hours is divided into two categories:

- Informal self-directed and professional activities; and
- Formal structured activities.

At least 10 hours of claimed CPD must be in the Formal category.

An effective CPD regime for architects should have as its basis the *National Standard of Competency for Architects* (the Standard), which is available on the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) website.

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

CPD activities in each year should 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.



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Architects are expected to explore a range of relevant Elements of Competency and Performance Criteria to strategically develop their knowledge and skills.

Providers of CPD

The Board does not accredit CPD providers.

There is a multitude of CPD providers, including:

- Universities;
- Professional and industry associations;
- Membership organisations;
- Architects' groups or networks;
- Commercial education & training providers;
- Employers;
- Architects' Learning Groups;
- NSW Architects Registration Board;
- Product and service suppliers (Note: all CPD activities should be technically accurate, educational and well-balanced, and not just a marketing exercise to promote specific products or services).

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

CPD activities



Architects are responsible for self-determining which CPD activities they undertake based on what they consider appropriate to their individual needs.

Architects should be guided in their selection of CPD activities by their own assessment of published information about the course structure, the reputation of the provider, the expertise of the presenter, the quality of the activity and the relevance of the subject matter to determine if a particular activity is appropriate to their learning needs, and whether it constitutes an Informal or Formal activity.

Formal CPD

At least 10 hours of CPD claimed annually must be Formal CPD.

Formal CPD activities are structured and relate to practice as an architect. They are in addition to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment.

Formal CPD activities fall under seven broad categories:

1. Provider-delivered activities that include a structured assessment task that genuinely tests participants' understanding of content;
2. Provider-delivered activities that are structured to include significant interaction between the presenter and the participants, such as a structured workshop where participants are required to complete an individual or group task or actively participate in exercises, case studies, workshops, role-plays, discussions and so on;
3. Activities relating to the preparation and delivery of CPD activities; (**a maximum 5 hrs per year may be claimed in this category*)

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4. Activities relating to the teaching of architecture at a tertiary level that involve significant preparation and/or scholarship, as in the development of new course and/or lecture content and/or the definition of new curriculum; (**a maximum 5 hrs per year may be claimed in this category*)
5. Structured training activities delivered by the Board and the AACA for NSW Examiners and Assessors who are engaged in the assessment of candidates of the various pathways to registration; (**1 hr per year may be claimed for any one type of training activity, up to a maximum of 3 hrs per year in this category*)
6. Authorship of published articles, books, papers; (**a maximum 5 hrs per year may be claimed in this category*)
7. Participation in Architects' Learning Groups. (**a maximum 3 hrs per year may be claimed for preparing and presenting Learning Sessions; a maximum 10 hrs per year may be claimed for participating in Learning Sessions*)

Provider-delivered Formal CPD activities must include:

- New knowledge and skills are acquired from, or shared with, peers;
- Learning outcomes are clearly stated by the provider and mapped to relevant Units of Competency / Elements of Competency / Performance Criteria from the Standard;
- A structured assessment task is included to genuinely test participants' understanding of content; or there is a significant interaction between the presenter and the participant;
- Presenters have appropriate academic, technical or practical expertise.



Informal CPD

Up to 10 hours of CPD claimed annually may be Informal CPD.

Informal CPD activities include self-directed study and professional activities that relate to practice as an architect. They are in addition to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment.

A maximum of two hours may be claimed for any one Informal CPD event.

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

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

- Self-directed study of practice notes, technical/professional journals, podcasts, etc;
- Talks and presentations by peers;
- 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;
- Authorship of published articles/books/papers etc (where not already claimed as Formal CPD);

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- Involvement in mentoring programs;
- Tutoring in architecture at a tertiary level where there is no significant preparation and/or involvement in the development of new content or curriculum (such as in Design studio tutoring, where architects are often not required to do any preparation);
- Marking work produced by architecture students at a tertiary level (such as a guest critic role or regular marking of work undertaken by a tutor);
- Participation as a NSW Examiner for the Board's Architectural Practice Examination or as an Assessor for other pathways to registration;
- Participation in professional practice committees and advisory groups through professional associations, regulatory authorities, or government bodies, such as Standards Australia;
- Raising awareness of architecture in primary and secondary schools.

Features of Informal CPD activities include:

- New knowledge and skills are acquired from, or shared with, peers;
- Learning outcomes can be identified;
- Activity is intended to be educational and is in addition to activities already undertaken in the normal course of practice or employment;
- Consideration has been given as to how the knowledge and skills gained from the activity may be applied to practice or employment.



Record keeping

Architects are required at their annual renewal of registration to sign a declaration and demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps in the previous registration year to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills necessary for the provision of the architectural services that they normally provide.

Architects must upload a detailed record of their CPD activity for the last 12-month period and **should keep records of their activities for at least five years**. Records must include the date, activity name/description, provider name, relevant Unit(s) of Competency covered by the activity, category of activity (ie. Formal or Informal), and number of hours claimed for the activity.

Additionally, architects are required to retain evidence for all Formal CPD activities claimed and will be required to provide this to the Board if they are subject to a CPD Audit.

For provider-delivered CPD, the following evidence is required:

- A certificate of completion for every Formal CPD activity as proof of 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.
- Evidence of the 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



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participant (eg. Personal notes taken during the activity or a photograph of work produced).

Compliance

Where an architect is not able to satisfy the Board that they have met their CPD obligations and where it is the Board's view that no extenuating circumstances apply, this may be grounds for characterising the architect's behaviour as **unsatisfactory professional conduct**, as defined by the Architects Act 2003.

When there is non-compliance of a legislative requirement administered by the Board, the Board may initiate a complaint against the architect. In this case, the Board complaint against the architect would be for failing to undertake CPD as a condition of their registration as a practising architect in NSW.

Additionally, where any complaint is made against the professional conduct of an architect, the Board may require the architect to produce evidence of appropriate CPD activities for the previous 5 years.

CPD Audit

An audit of CPD is carried out annually on five percent of all practising architects. Architects for CPD audit are randomly selected by algorithm as well as on the basis of a risk assessment by the Board. Architects selected for CPD audit may also include:

- Architects who transferred in the previous registration year from the Non-practising to Practising category;
- Architects who re-register after September of each registration year;
- Architects who have been restored to the Register after more than five years and who at the Registrar's discretion may be required to report on CPD activities;
- Architects who are the subject of a complaint investigation by the Board;
- Architects who are the subject of a disciplinary action by the Board and who, at the Board's discretion, may be required to undertake and report on CPD activities; and
- Architects who fail to provide evidence of CPD activities by 1 September of the year in which they are required to report.

Exemptions

To comply with the Code, architects should undertake 20 hours total CPD, of which at least 10 hours must be Formal CPD activities.

Architects registered in the Non-Practising category, and architects residing and practising overseas are exempt from the requirement to undertake CPD.

Architects who work part-time are not exempt from the CPD requirement and are not entitled to a pro-rata calculation of the CPD requirement based on their part-time employment status.

Where an architect has not met the minimum hours required, the Board may take into account individual circumstances when considering whether all reasonable steps have been taken by the architect to meet their CPD obligations.



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Architects seeking a pro-rata exemption from the CPD requirements must at their annual renewal of registration upload a letter to the Board outlining their circumstances.

Matters that may be taken into consideration by the Board include:

- Has the architect or an immediate family member suffered serious illness or some other misadventure?
- Has the architect been overseas for a considerable part of the year and not offering architectural services during that period (at least 3 consecutive months)?
- Has the architect been on parental leave during the registration year?
- Has the architect been unemployed for a considerable part of the year (at least 3 consecutive months)?
- Has the architect been added to the Register part way through the year?
- Are there other exceptional circumstances?

Where extenuating circumstances are identified by the Board, a pro-rata calculation of the CPD requirement may be applied.

Moving between Practising and Non-Practising categories

Architects who transfer within a registration year from the Practising to the Non-Practising category, or vice versa, are required to submit evidence that they have met the pro rata CPD requirements at annual renewal.



Retirement

Architects who are seeking to retire are required to provide evidence that they have met the CPD requirements in the year prior to their retirement.

Policy revised 9 August 2019