The pathway to working as an architect in Victoria

A resource for students/graduates

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Understanding the registration process and post registration requirements for architects is complicated, and there are several sources of relevant information that must be consulted.

This guide has been developed to assist both students and candidates for registration to better navigate the registration process to becoming an architect in Victoria. This guide aims to provide a summary of available sources of information and clearly define the purpose of the Architects Registration Board of Victoria (ARBV), outline the registration process and an architect's post registration requirements. It includes handy hints, frequently asked questions, and links to relevant websites and resources.

What is the Architects Registration Board of Victoria?

The ARBV is the statutory authority for the regulation of architects in accordance with the Architects Act. The main purposes of the Act include:

- to provide for the registration of architects and approval of companies and partnerships
- to regulate the professional conduct of architects
- to provide a procedure for handling complaints against architects
- to regulate the use of terms such as "architect", "architectural services" "architectural design"

Our focus is on professional conduct and practice, developing a strong and effective compliance culture among architects, and a built environment that is compliant with building codes and standards.

With the support of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA), the ARBV also accredits architectural programs of study, which can be completed to meet the qualification requirements for registration

The ARBV's overarching purpose is to protect the community interest and instil confidence in the regulation, integrity and delivery of architectural services in Victoria
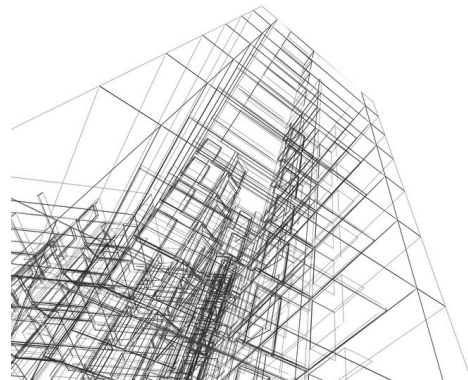
The ARBV's vision

A well-designed, liveable and safe built environment for Victorians.

The ARBV's mission

We will engage, educate and regulate to ensure architectural services in Victoria are delivered according to high professional standards and contribute to improved building outcomes for the benefit of the community.

Where can I find a copy of the Architects Act?

A copy to the Victoria Architects Act 1991 can be found **here**.

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How does the ARBV regulate the professional conduct of architects?

Contained within the Architects Regulations 2015 is the Victorian Architects Code of Professional Conduct (known as the Code), this sets out requirements architects must comply with relating to:

- standards of conduct
- skills and knowledge
- approval of documents
- contracts and agreements with clients
- administering a building contract for a client
- professional fees and costs
- provision of information to clients
- retaining documents and record keeping
- maintaining confidentiality of client information
- disclosing conflicts of interest, referrals, and endorsements
- engendering confidence in and respect for the profession
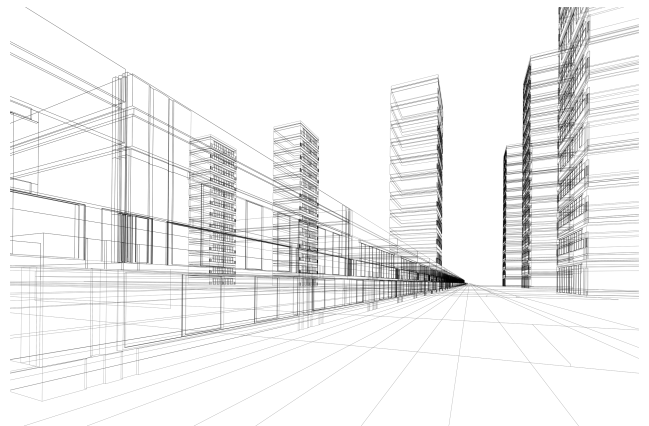- maintaining standards and integrity of the profession

To find a copy of the Architects Regulations 2015 and the Victorian Architects Code of Professional Conduct please visit **here**.

How does the ARBV regulate the professional conduct of architects?

There are two main areas of focus with complaints made to the ARBV, one is regarding the professional conduct of registered entities (architects, companies or partnerships) and the second is regarding offences against the Act referred to as prohibited conduct.

- Professional conduct matters relate to the conduct and practice of an architect in carrying out their work. Following an investigation of unprofessional conduct, architects may receive written advice on compliance from the Board or may be referred to the Architects Tribunal for disciplinary proceedings. The Architects' Tribunal is separate from and independent from the ARBV.

- Prohibited conduct matters relate to offences committed in breach of the Architects Act. This means that a person or body cannot represent themselves or allow themselves to be represented as an architect or as providing architectural services unless registered or approved under the Architects Act. To do so, is an offence under the Act and may result in enforcement proceedings by the ARBV for prosecution in the Magistrates Court of Victoria, which may result in a criminal record.

For more information on the ARBV complaints and investigations function please refer to the **website**.

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What are the key registration requirements to becoming an architect?

There are 5 key requirements for registration under the Architects Act.

- The person applying for registration must be a fit and proper person.
- The person is required to have completed a prescribed course of study. For example, a master's degree accredited by the ARBV or another Australian Architects Registration Board.
- The person is required to have completed one of the pathways to registration.
- The person must be covered by the required professional indemnity insurance.
- The person must have paid the required fees.

For more information of the registration requirements please visit our **website.**

What are the classes of registration in Victoria?

There are two classes of registration in Victoria.

- Practising
- Non-practising

When registering for the first time in Victoria, you can only register as a practising architect.

Non-practising architects cannot provide architectural services, but they can use the title architect, but they must make it clear they are non-practising. Non-practising architects are not required to be covered by insurance and do not have to pay any renewal fees. Architects found to be providing architectural services while in the non-practising class of registration may face disciplinary proceedings.

Once registered, what are my ongoing professional obligations?

Upon renewal of your registration each year, an architect must confirm the following:

- The person applying for renewal is a fit and proper person.
- The person applying for renewal must have fulfilled their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) obligations.
- The person applying for renewal is covered by the required professional indemnity insurance.
- The person applying for renewal has paid the required fees.

What is the registration process?

There are 3 main pathways to registration:

- The Architectural Practice Exam (APE) is the most common pathway to registration. This is the pathway undertaken by most architectural graduates who have graduated from an Australian or International AACA accredited course of study.
- The Experienced Practitioner Assessment (EPA) is a competency-based assessment that involves submitting a portfolio and an assessment conducted with registered architect examiners. This is conducted by the AACA on behalf of the ARBV. This pathway can be used by both overseas qualified and locally experienced practitioners who have not registered in Australia previously.
- The final pathway is Mutual Recognition, (including Automatic Mutual Recognition) this allows equivalent registration or deemed registration in another state or territory from where you were originally registered. This process generally covers most professions and allows freedom of movement.

For more information visit the AACA **website**.

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What is the Architectural Practice Exam (APE)?

The APE is administered by the AACA on behalf of the ARBV and other state and territory Architects Registration Boards. It is conducted in this way in order to have a nationally consistent assessment, which allows graduates to move interstate and still be able to seek registration.

The APE is conducted in three parts:
- Part 1: Logbook and Statement of Practical Experience
- Part 2: National Examination Paper, and
- Part 3: Examination by Interview

The ARBV has information on its website **here**, and likewise the AACA also have resources available on their website **here**.

One of the most important documents for candidates is the **APE Handbook.pdf** – we encourage all architectural students and graduates to read it prior to starting to log their experience.

To download the Handbook and other key documents/resources/support documents to assist you in the APE process please go to the Key Documents Section on the AACA website **here**.

The Handbook has lots of useful information about the APE, including sample questions for Part 2 of the Practice exam. These can be found under Appendix 2: **APE Handbook**

To start to log your hours for Part 1 of the APE process, you will need to first login to the AACA 2025 Logbook. To access this please go to Logbook login **here**.

Useful Links and Resources

The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA).

The AACA establishes, coordinates, and advocates national standards of practice of architecture for the benefit of the Australian community. A not-for-profit organisation established by the Australian State and Territory Architects Registration Boards to facilitate a nationally consistent approach to the accreditation of architectural education and assessment programs on the path to registration as an architect.

AACA National Standards of Competency for Architects 2021 (NSCA).

The (NSCA) identifies the skills, knowledge and capabilities required for the general practice of architecture in Australia.

Architectural Practice Exam (APE).

The APE is the most common pathway to registration as an architect in Australia. It is a nationally recognised exam process held at the same time across all jurisdictions and conducted twice a year.

- APE resources and information - **2026 Architectural Practice Examination | Architects Accreditation Council of Australia**
- APE logbook - **Login - AACA Logbook**
- Architectural Practice Examination Candidate Handbook - **APE Handbook**

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About other ARB's

Each state and territory have their own registration board, as legislation varies from jurisdictions. There are some differences in the legislation for each jurisdiction. To better understand the legislative differences between the ARBs, please refer to the AACA comparison between the States and Territories **here**.

If you are thinking of working interstate, it is important to understand the requirements of that jurisdiction. For eligibility and specific requirements please visit the State and Territory sites:

- ACT - **Architect registration - Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate - Planning**
- NSW – **https://www.architects.nsw.gov.au**
- NT – **https://architects.nt.gov.au**
- QLD – **https://www.boaq.qld.gov.au**
- SA – **https://www.archboardsa.org.au**
- TAS – **https://architectsboardtas.org.au**
- WA – **https://architectsboard.org.au**

Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB)

The ABCB is a standards writing body responsible for the National Construction Code, WaterMark and CodeMark Certification Schemes, and regulatory reform in the construction industry. The ABCB is a joint initiative of the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments, together with the building and plumbing industries. To find out more about the ABCB please visit their **website**.

National Construction Code (NCC)

The NCC is Australia's primary set of technical design and construction provisions for buildings. As a performance-based code, it sets the minimum required level for the safety, health, amenity, accessibility and sustainability of certain buildings. The ABCB, on behalf of the Australian Government and each State and Territory government, produces and maintains the NCC.

Useful NCC resources:
- **National Construction Code | NCC**
- **Understanding the NCC | NCC**
- **Resource library | ABCB**

You can also find some useful video resources that provide an introduction to the NCC on the AACA website. Please visit their **website**.

Professional Bodies

There are several professional bodies available for architects and students.
- **Association of Consulting Architects Australia**
- **ArchiTeam**
- **Australian Institute of Architects**

Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC)

The BPC regulates Victoria's building and plumbing industry according to the Building Act 1993 and associated regulations. The BPC has information on building regulations, registration, fees, enforcement and you can use it to confirm the registration status of a building practitioner. The BPC is also home to a comprehensive list of practice notes and resources that are relevant to both builders and architects. To find out more about the BPC please visit their **website**.

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Frequently asked questions.

What can I call myself when working before registration?
If you have completed a prescribed course of study, but are not registered with the ARBV, you should call yourself a **graduate of architecture**. If you are still studying your course, you should call yourself a student of architecture.

Are there limitations to the type of work I can do as a student or graduate or architecture?
When working as a student or graduate of architecture within an architecture practice, the work you undertake must be supervised by a registered architect. This means that all work you do must be reviewed and checked by a supervising architect involved in the project before it is issued to a client, consultant or authority. For example, if you have been preparing a set of town planning drawings, these drawings must be reviewed and completed to the satisfaction of a supervising architect, before they are submitted to the council for assessment.

Where can I access the APE Logbook?
To set up an account and access the Logbook and start logging your hours today, please visit the AACA logbook portal **Login - AACA Logbook**.

What is the format of the APE Logbook?
The Logbook is now in an online format. To set up an account and access the Logbook and start logging your hours today, please visit the portal **Login - AACA Logbook**.

Is there a cost associated with access to the online Logbook?
There is no cost associated with accessing the online Logbook and logging your hours.

When can I start to log my experience in the Logbook?
You can start logging your experience before graduation. As soon as you start working in an architecture firm or for an aligned professional, you can start to log your hours. However, you can only log a maximum of 1650 hrs of pre-graduation experience.

Can I use experience gained overseas in my Logbook?
Yes, you can include a maximum of 1650 hrs of experience working overseas. This can include experience gained before you commence your master's degree.

In my Logbook can I use experience pre-graduation?
Yes, you can include up to 1650 hrs of experience pre-graduation. This can be both in Australia or overseas.

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What documents do I need when preparing to sit the APE?

Visit the **AACA** to access the online **Logbook**. Ensure you also download a copy of the **Procedures for Candidates** (NSCA2015) and the **APE Handbook**.

The following documents are required for submission at Part 1:
- Completed logbook (via the AACA online logbook portal) exported as a PDF.
- Statement of Practical Experience (SoPE).
  - A one-page summary CV.
  - Project detail pages (2000-3000 words).
  - APE Performance Criteria Report (completed).
  - Signed letters of reference (where required).
  - Verification signature.
- Evidence of approved qualification/entry pathway (academic transcript).
- Completed application form via the ARBV portal
- Current Statutory Declaration attesting to the accuracy of all the documentation submitted.

For a detailed explanation of each item above please refer to the **APE Handbook**.

To help you to prepare for the APE, discuss your intention to sit the APE with your supervisor and employer. Many architecture practices have internal formal and informal mentoring and APE preparation programs for intending APE candidates. You may also choose to establish a study group with other intending APE candidates.

For more information on the APE, the ARBV has prepared a candidate information session recording that can be found on our website and viewed **here**.

To check current submission dates and fees, please visit our **website**.

How can I learn more about the Performance Criteria (PCs)?

You can find more information about the PCs on the **AACA website**. There are four key documents about the PCs:
- 2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects
- 2021 NSCA Explanatory Notes and Definitions PDF
- Architectural Practice Exam Candidate Handbook
- Architectural Practice Exam Support Material

Appendix 1 of the APE Handbook includes a detailed breakdown down of which PCs are relevant to each part of the APE.

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Are there any sample questions for Part 2 of the APE?

The handbook has lots of useful information about the APE, including sample questions for Part 2 of the Practice exam. These can be found under Appendix 2: **APE Handbook**.

In my logbook can I only use experience working under an architect?

Practical experience may be gained in the following ways:

- As an employee of an architecture firm under the supervision of an architect.
- As an employee in a building design firm.
- As an employee in a firm in an allied field in the construction industry.
- In relevant government agencies.
- Independently in a self-employed capacity.

Refer to Pages 14, and 16 of the **APE Handbook**. for more information about gaining experience.

A candidate must justify why they consider the practical experience gained in the allied field is comparable to that gained by an employee of an architecture firm. This includes, experience gained through independent work, work in an allied field and/or work not as an employee of an architecture firm under the supervision of an architect.

Who can sign off on my Logbook?

Each project included in the SoPE must be appropriately verified. Where you have included a project in your SoPE and experience was gained under the supervision of a registered architect, the signature of the supervising architect is required, and this must be the supervising architect recorded in the Logbook for that project. Where the work has been supervised by a person who is not a registered architect, then the supervisors name, verification signature, credentials and contact details must be provided. Where a project has been undertaken by the candidate with no supervisor, the candidate should include the client's name and contact details, and the name, contact details and project role of other relevant professionals able to verify the candidate's description of the project and the candidate's involvement.

Candidates who are logging experience gained in contexts that are not as an employee of an architecture firm under the supervision of an architect must include signed letters of reference from two employers or, if self-employed, from professionals within the construction industry such as consultants the candidate has worked closely with, such as a structural engineer or builder, or two clients.

Refer to Pages 17 and 18 of the **APE Handbook** for more information about verification signatures and references.

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How can I ensure I get the right experience?

The **APE Handbook** and logbook have a clearly defined number of hours of experience required across all relevant Performance Criteria. To understand the requirements better please read the **APE Handbook**, **2021 NSCA**, and **2021 NSCA Explanatory Notes and Definitions**.

What can I do if I am not getting the required experience from my employer?

It can be tricky to get the right experience to be able to complete your logbook and feel confident you have the right experience to undertake the registration process. Many people take 4-5 years post-graduation to complete the required experience across all areas of the PCs. If you are not getting the experience you need, you may need to consider changing workplaces, or you could approach your employer about strategies to obtain the experience you are missing. Under the **Architects Award**, Part 4, Minimum Wages and Related Matters item 13.3, employers are required to undertake an annual review process to assist the graduate of architecture's progress towards obtaining the mandatory experience based on the prescribed competencies for registration. This is the responsibility of the employer, and your right as an employee.

Is the APE registration examination process specific to Victoria?

The registration examination process is a national assessment run by the **AACA**, so it is Australia wide. Each state registration body is responsible for running the assessments on behalf of the AACA. Once you have passed your registration examination you will need to apply for registration, and this is state/territory based.

Can I work overseas as an architect after registration in Australia?

Before working overseas as an architect, you will need to understand the registration requirements of the country/jurisdiction in which you are intending to work. Australia has mutual recognition arrangements with a number of countries overseas.

There are mutual recognition agreements in place between Canada, Australia and New Zealand; Hong Kong and Australia; Japan and Australia; Singapore and Australia; the UK, Australia and New Zealand; the US, Australia and New Zealand.

For more information and to review the international agreements and arrangements please visit the AACA website publications, **Publications | AACA.**

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Does registration an Australian State/Territory Board allow me to work in New Zealand?
There is a mutual recognition agreement between Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Please contact the New Zealand Registered Architects Board to discuss application requirements to register in New Zealand under Mutual Recognition. For more information and to review the international agreements/arrangements please visit the AACA website publications, **Publications | AACA.**

If I get registered in New Zealand, am I eligible for mutual recognition in Australia?
There is a mutual recognition agreement between Canada, Australia and New Zealand. If you wish to apply for registration to work in Australia, please contact the Board within the relevant jurisdiction to discuss application requirement to register in that State/Territory. For more information and to review the international agreements/arrangements please visit the AACA website publications, **Publications | AACA.**

What is mutual recognition?
Mutual recognition allows architects who are registered in other Australian states or territories, New Zealand and select other countries to register as architects in Victoria without completing a formal assessment or examination.

To be eligible for mutual recognition from another Australian jurisdiction or New Zealand, you must:
- be currently registered as an architect by a relevant registration board
- have professional indemnity insurance.

Practitioners would use mutual recognition if relocating to Victoria from interstate or New Zealand. If you are registered interstate and will continue to reside interstate and only intend to work in Victoria, you may be eligible for Automatic Mutual Recognition, for more information see below.

There are mutual recognition agreements in place between Canada, Australia and New Zealand; Hong Kong and Australia; Japan and Australia; Singapore and Australia; the UK, Australia and New Zealand; the US, Australia and New Zealand.

How does Automatic Mutual Recognition work? Do I need to notify the jurisdiction I am working in that state/territory?
The Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) scheme allows individuals to use their home state occupational registration to work in participating Australian states and territories, without the need to apply for registration or pay fees in the host state. Only architects registered in Australia and whose home state 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 that has not adopted AMR will not be entitled to use AMR at this stage. The only jurisdiction currently not participating in the AMR scheme is Queensland.

To access AMR, practitioners must notify the ARBV of their intention to practise in Victoria via an online form **here**.