

Architectural Practice Examination

2026

APBSA acknowledges the Kurna people, Traditional Custodians of the land in which we meet today and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

APE - Architectural Practice Examination

APBSA Team

Registrar	Sue Crawford
Administration Coordinator	Georgina Dungey
SA and National Convenor	Paul Boyce OAM
SA Deputy Convenor	Katrina Worssam
APE Assessors	Trained, registered architects with a minimum of 5 years experience in the industry

APE - Architectural Practice Examination

APE Overview

The Architectural Practice Examination (APE) is a national, competency-based assessment based on the National Standard of Competency for Architects (NSCA) 2021, comprising three parts:

Part 1 - Eligibility and experience assessment

Part 2 - National Examination Paper

Part 3 - Examination by Interview

Candidates who satisfactorily complete all three parts of the APE may apply for registration as an architect in any Australian state or territory.

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Who delivers the APE in South Australia?

Organisations

APBSA	Architectural Practice Board of South Australia	https://www.archboardsa.org.au
AACA	Architects Accreditation Council of Australia	https://www.aaca.org.au

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Who does what?

Exam Delivery		
	APBSA	AACA
Part 1 + 2 application (online)	✓	
Part 2 only application (online)	✓	
Part 1 document submission	✓	
Part 1 assessment	✓	
Part 1 results release	✓	
Part 2 (NEP) sitting (Online)		✓
Part 2 assessment		✓
Part 2 results release	✓	
Part 3 application	✓	
Part 3 interview allocation	✓	
Part 3 interview	✓	
Part 3 results release	✓	
Part 1 complaints and queries	✓	
Part 2 complaints and queries	cc APBSA	✓
Part 3 complaints and queries	✓	
Reasonable adjustment	✓	
Updated document 2 and stat dec (if not sitting Part 3 in same session as Part 1)	✓	

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National standard of competency for architects (2021 NSCA)

The National Standard of Competency for Architects 2021 (NSCA) sets the national benchmark against which applicants for registration as architects in Australia are assessed.

It 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 has a total of 60 performance criteria which are assessed across programs on the path to registration as an architect.

Of these, 48 performance criteria are assessed in the APE.

The 2021 NSCA and Explanatory Notes can be found at the AACA website:
<https://aaca.org.au/national-standard-of-competency-for-architects/2021nsca/>

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Who is eligible to sit the APE?

Qualified individuals who have one of:

- Australian Accredited Architecture Qualification
- Overseas Qualifications Assessment [OQA]
- National Program of Assessment [NPrA]

And the required practical experience:

- The minimum required hours of practical experience, mapped to the relevant Part 1 NSCA Performance Criteria

Please note: There are other registration pathways available for both overseas-experienced practitioners and locally experienced practitioners that will not be discussed today.

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Practical experience requirements

Minimum experience

- 3,300 hours of practical experience
- Mapped across all 35 Performance Criteria (the other PCs will be assessed in Parts 2 and 3)
- Gained over a minimum of two years
- Gained within the 10 years prior to application

Composition of the 3,300 hours

Must include:

- At least 1,650 hours (minimum one year) in Australia, after graduation

May include:

- Up to 1,650 hours before graduation
- Up to 1,650 hours outside Australia

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Practical experience requirements (continued)

Where can practical experience be gained?

- In an architectural firm under the supervision of an architect
- In allied construction roles (e.g. for a builder, engineer, interior designer or building designer) even if under the supervision of an architect
- In a relevant government agency
- In independent practice

Important notes

- Allied field and independent experience must be justified as comparable to architectural practice
- Unsupervised experience must demonstrate principal decision maker role and capability (NSCA 2021)
- Up to 70 hours of non-project work may be logged against mandatory Performance Criteria (e.g. office management and non project meetings, training and formal CPD)

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Part 1

What is it?

APE Part 1 is a document-based assessment of a candidate's eligibility and practical experience.

It confirms whether a candidate:

- meets an approved entry pathway (qualification, OQA or NPrA), and
- has completed the required practical experience mapped to the Part 1 NSCA Performance Criteria

Candidates who successfully complete Part 1 are eligible to proceed to APE Part 2 – the National Examination Paper

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Part 1 - How to apply

- A single application is used for **both** APE Part 1 and Part 2
(unless a candidate is sitting Part 2 only)
- Applications are made online by logging on to the APBSA website
- To make an application candidates must first register through the APBSA website as an APE candidate
- Once registered and logged in, candidates can apply online and upload their documents. Candidates sitting Part 2 only are not required to upload updated documents (other than the application form) until they apply for Part 3
- Payment must be made to finalise an application
- If you pass APE Part 1 but are not proceeding with Part 2 in this session, please notify APBSA.

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Part 1 - Documents

Two documents must be uploaded with the application: Document 1 and Document 2.

Document 1 – Application, Identity and qualification documents

- Application form (available on APBSA website)
- Approved qualification, or letter of equivalence from AACCA
- Photo identification
- Change of name certificate (if applicable)
- An APBSA Statutory Declaration (available on APBSA website)

****All documents in Document 1, other than the application form, must be certified by an authorised witness.***

A list of authorised witnesses is available from the South Australian Attorney-General's Department:

<https://www.agd.sa.gov.au/services-support/JP-witnesses/authorised-witnesses>

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Part 1 – Documents (continued)

Document 2 – Experience and competency documents

- AACA Logbook (current version)
- One-page CV (front page of SoPE)
- Statement of Practical Experience (SoPE)
- Performance Criteria Report
- References (only if experience was not gained in a registered architectural firm under the supervision of a registered architect)

No images are permitted in Document 2, other than the identifying photograph included in the logbook.

Project names and project information must be consistent across the Logbook, Statement of Practical Experience and Performance Criteria Report.

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Part 1 – Logbook

AACA Logbook

All APE Part 1 candidates must use the current online AACA Logbook to record their practical experience.

Candidates must fill out the logbook and register with their full legal name, which corresponds to their formal identification document (for example, their passport).

Prescribed Performance Criteria

Candidates are required to gain practical experience in relation to all of the 35 Performance Criteria that are mandatory to APE Part 1.

It must include:

- A minimum of 35 hours experience in each of the APE Part 1 mandatory Performance Criteria
- A maximum of 350 hours in any one of the APE Part 1 mandatory Performance Criteria (unless the minimum hours have been met in all Performance Criteria)

Candidates may also log a maximum of 70 hours non-project work against the mandatory Performance Criteria (for example, practice experience).

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Part 1 – Logbook

- Each log sheet requires the supervising architect's name and registration number
- The logbook must cover only the last ten years and focus on the last two years
- The logbook must differentiate between hours worked on projects in Australia and those worked outside Australia
- Work undertaken in Australia on projects located overseas is classified as work outside Australia
- At least one year post graduation work must be in Australia
- The first page of the logbook must include a current candidate photograph

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Part 1 – Curriculum Vitae (CV)

The one-page summary CV provides an overall view of the candidate's professional experience. It should include:

- Personal information (including contact details)
- Qualifications
- Employment

Please do not include any images in your CV

The one-page summary CV should be included at the beginning of the SoPE (but is not included in the wordcount)

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Part 1 – Statement of Practical Experience

The Statement of Practical Experience (SoPE) outlines the candidate's practical experience and provides assessors with evidence that the candidate has satisfied the practical experience requirements. It will be used by the assessors to prepare for the Part 3 Interview. Candidates should refer to the NSCA 2021 Explanatory Notes when preparing their SoPE.

The Statement should:

- Emphasise work undertaken in the two years immediately preceding the APE application
- Be presented in chronological order of projects
- Have a word count of 2,000–3,000 words (excluding CV)
- The word count must be stated
- Demonstrate all mandatory APE Part 1 Performance Criteria
- Ensure the title 'architect' is used correctly throughout
- Include the candidate's name and contact details on every page
- Every Project in the SoPE must be mapped to the Performance Criteria Report

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Part 1– Statement of Practical Experience (continued)

Every project listed in the Statement of Practical Experience must include:

- Project details (as specified)
- Provide an outline of the project brief
- Provide a detailed description of the level/type of practical experience and demonstrate an understanding gained by the candidate in each of the mandatory Performance Criteria. This should demonstrate an understanding of the Performance Criteria
- Provide sufficient evidence to support the claimed experience in the online AACA Logbook
- Each project page must be signed by the relevant supervising architect (with their registration number) and be prefaced by the statement: ***"I confirm the candidate's description of the project and the candidate's involvement."***

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Part 1– Statement of Practical Experience (continued)

Project details- Each project description should include the following information:

- Project name
- Location - project address
- Country - Indigenous Country on which the project is located
- Period - the start and end date of the project that the candidate was involved in
- Gross floor area
- Estimated building construction cost
- Building type - e.g., single residential, commercial, hospital, school
- Construction - e.g., timber frame with CFC cladding, concrete frame
- Supervising architect name
- Supervising architect registration number
- Procurement method - e.g., Design and Construct, fully documented fixed lump sum, cost plus
- Practice construction admin role - e.g., full contract administration, partial services in D&C contract, N/A
- Candidate responsibility - the candidate's role on the project
- Performance Criteria met in project

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Part 1– Performance Criteria Report

- The Performance Criteria Report cross-references the candidate's experience against the mandatory APE Part 1 Performance Criteria
- The report must be completed using the APE Performance Criteria Report submission template, available on the AACA website
- All projects listed in the Performance Criteria Report must also be listed in the Statement of Practical Experience, and vice versa

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Part 1 – Common Mistakes

- Documentation in incorrect order or includes incorrect documents
- Application form is incomplete and/or not signed
- Identification and qualification documents are not certified
- Projects in SoPE and Performance Criteria Report do not align
- Imagery has been included in the CV or Statement of Practical Experience
- Project names are inconsistent across documents
- Not every page of the Statement of Practical Experience has been signed and prefaced by the sentence “*I confirm the candidate's description of the project and the candidate's involvement*” by the supervising architect
- Information is missing in Project details
- References not provided where experience was not gained in a registered architectural practice under a supervising architect

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Part 1 – Review

- Administrative review is undertaken by the Convenor, Deputy Convenor, Registrar, and the Administration Coordinator
- Queries may be raised from this process such as missing signatures, missing or uncertified documents and other details
- You may be asked to resubmit your Application documents within a specified time period (e.g. 2-3 days) if any problems are identified
- Applicants will be provided with only one opportunity to resubmit

What happens next?

- APBSA will advise candidates of the result of their Part 1 Application
- If successful, APBSA will provide candidate details to the AACCA, who manage APE Part 2, the National Examination Paper (NEP). AACCA will contact you regarding proctoring and exam arrangements

**Candidates who pass APE Part 1 and wish to defer to a later NEP sitting, are requested to contact APBSA as soon as possible after receiving their result.*

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Part 2 – National Examination Paper (NEP)

Overview

The APE Part 2 – National Examination Paper (NEP) is a competency-based examination that assesses knowledge and understanding of architectural practice.

It forms Part 2 of the Architectural Practice Examination (APE) and must be passed before candidates can proceed to Part 3 (Examination by Interview).

Exam structure

- 120-minute online examination (includes reading time)
- 80 questions

Generally, around 20 standalone questions and 12 scenarios with 5 questions although this format may vary.

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Part 2 – National Examination Paper (NEP)

Who runs it

- Coordinated nationally by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACCA)
- Delivered by Pearson using their proctoring agent
- Pearson communicates directly with candidates about scheduling and exam delivery

Exam delivery

- Proctored online exam in your own environment or in a testing centre
- Exam time scheduled by AACCA/Pearson
- Computer or laptop with camera and microphone required
- Must be undertaken in a private room with no interruptions
- Computer will be remotely monitored
- Allow extra time to log in and complete system checks
- If sitting at work, ensure IT access is permitted

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Part 2 – National Examination Paper (NEP)

Exam conditions

- No reference material permitted
- No additional screens or electronic devices
- A sample paper is available on the AACA website (Other sample papers in circulation may be outdated or incorrect)

Technical issues

- If technical difficulties occur, contact AACA or Pearson immediately and follow the instructions they provide

What happens next?

- Results are typically available 4 weeks after the exam
- AACA provides the results to APBSA
- APBSA notifies candidates of results by email
- Part 3 application opening coincides with results release
- Candidates who pass Part 2 have 2 years, from the date they have been notified of the Part 2 results to sit Part 3

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Part 3 - Interview

What is it?

APE Part 3 is a competency-based interview.

It assesses whether, on balance, the candidate demonstrates the technical knowledge, skills and application of skills in architectural practice required to perform to the standard expected of an architect in Australia.

The interview:

- is conducted by two registered architect assessors (minimum five years' experience)
- may include a third assessor for training or quality assurance
- is usually held in person (unless circumstances require otherwise)
- runs for up to 60 minutes

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Part 3 - Interview

How to apply?

To apply for Part 3, candidates must:

- Log in to the APBSA website
- Complete & upload the Part 3 application form
- Pay the fee to finalise the application

If a candidate did not sit Part 1 in the current session, they must also upload:

- An updated Document 2 including additional experience gained since their previous submission
- A new Statutory Declaration

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Part 3 - Interview

What happens after you apply?

- Applicants are allocated assessors and interview times based on assessor availability and potential conflicts of interest
- Candidates are notified by email of their allocated assessors and interview time (usually around two weeks before interviews commence)
- If candidates have any concerns regarding their assessor allocation, conflicts of interest or interview arrangements, they should contact APBSA as soon as possible

To prepare for the interview, allocated assessors are provided with the candidate's Document 2 submission and National Examination Paper (NEP) results.

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Part 3 Interview

Hints for candidates

- Try not to be nervous. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and discuss the depth of your experience with registered architects
- Refer to your projects to illustrate and support the responses you give to the assessors' questions
- Assessors are genuinely interested in understanding your experience and capabilities. The interview is not intended to “catch candidates out”, but to gain an in-depth view of professional knowledge, judgement and practice
- You are not expected to know everything. The interview also assesses your ability to identify issues, exercise professional judgement and know where to find appropriate information when required
- Expect hypothetical scenarios. For example, if your experience is mainly in multi-storey commercial work, you may be asked about a small public building or residential project to demonstrate transferability of skills across different scales of practice
- Be familiar with the regulatory framework, including the *Architectural Practice Act 2009* and the *South Australian Code of Conduct*

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Part 3 - Interview

Results and next steps

- APBSA endeavours to issue results as soon as possible after all interviews have been finalised
- Candidates who do not meet the requirements will be advised of the Performance Criteria not met at interview
- Candidates who successfully meet the requirements may apply for registration with the relevant Architect Registration Board

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Complaints

APE results will only be reviewed if there is evidence of a misapplication of APE policies or procedures. Please note, the APE does not include provisions for conceded passes or grade adjustments based on subjective interpretation of performance.

How to make a complaint

Complaints about the APE must be made in writing, via email within 14 days of the candidate completing each part of the APE.

APE Part 1 and Part 3 – via email to registrar@archboardsa.org.au.

APE Part 2 – via email to AACA to mail@aaca.org.au and cc. registrar@archboardsa.org.au.

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Reasonable adjustment

The reasonable adjustment application process is now in place and is managed by APBSA.

Candidates who may require a reasonable adjustment for any part of the APE should refer to the reasonable adjustment information sheet and application form available on the APBSA website.

If you feel that you may require a reasonable adjustment for any part of the APE, please contact the Registrar to discuss your circumstances prior to submitting your application.

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2026 Timetable

	Session 1	Session 2
BRIEFING SESSION	Tuesday 20 January	Tuesday 7 July
PART 1 & 2		
Application opens:	Tuesday 20 January	Tuesday 7 July
Application closes:	Sunday 8 February (11:59 PM)	Thursday 16 July (11:59 PM)
PART 2		
National Examination Paper	Tuesday 14 April	Tuesday 22 September
PART 3:		
Application opens:	Wednesday 6 May	Wednesday 14 October
Application closes:	Sunday 17 May (11:59pm)	Sunday 25 October (11:59 PM)
PART 3		
Examination by Interview	Commencing Monday 15 June	Commencing Monday 16 November

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Where do I find?

Resources and Documents			
	APBSA	AACA	AIA/ACA/PARC
Logbook Online Platform		✓	
Part 1 + 2 application form	✓		
Part 3 application form	✓		
Statutory Declaration	✓		
Part 1 checklist	✓		
APE application guidelines	✓		
2026 APE Timetable and Fees	✓		
Architectural Practice Act 2009	✓		
SA Architects Code of Conduct	✓		
Guidance Note 2 Use of the Title "Architect" and its Derivatives	✓		
NSCA and Explanatory Notes		✓	
APE Online Video resources		✓	
Architectural Practice Examination Handbook		✓	
APE Support Material		✓	
APE Performance Criteria Report		✓	
NEP Remote Proctoring FAQs		✓	
Tutoring / Mentoring			✓

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Useful resources to support your APE journey

At the APBSA Website - <https://www.archboardsa.org.au/>

- Architectural Practice Act 2009
- The Architects' Code of Conduct
- APE application information and forms

At the AACA website - <https://aaca.org.au/>

- Logbook
- Performance Criteria Report
- Architectural practice exam handbook
- 2021 NSCA and explanation notes
- Various APE support material
- APE video resources
- Understanding the NCC video resources

At the AIA website - <https://acumen.architecture.com.au/>

- AIA Acumen and other online resources are available through the AIA website. Access requires AIA membership or a paid subscription.

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Support

While APBSA is unable to provide coaching, candidates are encouraged to seek support through:

- Group Study with peers
- Conversations with your supervising architect and colleagues
- Attending Keith Neighbour Study Group [ACA]
- Undertaking the PAL's Program [AIA] or
- Practising Architecture (PARC) APE Tutorials

Any questions?

Thank you for your attendance

This presentation is available now on the APBSA website