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Continuing Registration: Information for Architects

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Introduction

Architecture is constantly changing. Technologies and construction methods, the law, and society's needs and expectations are never static. The roles of individual architects also often change in terms of the services they offer, the building types they work on, and their interests and motivations.

In addition, sometimes the skills, knowledge and professionalism of an individual can decline. This may be due to illness, unemployment, isolation or complacency.

For these reasons, nowadays registration is not "for life". Architects are expected to stay up to date.

The law¹ requires that, to continue to be registered, architects must continue to meet the applicable minimum standards for registration and at least every five years the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) must confirm this.

To meet this requirement a five-yearly competence review procedure has been developed, which this paper describes. The procedure will work as follows.

- Those architects that have fully participated in the CPD programme (have the required 1000 CPD points) will be entitled to ongoing registration automatically (see also page 12).
- Those architects who have **not** fully participated in the CPD programme will be individually assessed to determine whether they still meet the standard.

Passing a five-yearly competence review entitles an architect to annual registration for five more years, after which the same procedure is required again, and so on. Architects first registered in 2006² must have their competence reviews by 2011.

The competence review procedure will operate as shown in the diagram overleaf.

Professional development

Among other things, one of the competence review requirements is that architects over the previous five years have carried out "appropriate professional development activities".³ All architects should have strategies in place now for keeping up to date by undertaking "appropriate professional development activities". This is each architect's individual responsibility.

An architect's professional development strategy can include participation in the NZRAB's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework or other independent professional development activities (PDA), or, as is likely, a mix of the two. Each architect's CPD and/or other professional development activities should be relevant to the practice roles undertaken, the services offered, and the architect's professional aspirations.

¹ The Registered Architects Act 2005 (S12 (1)) and the Registered Architects Rules 2006 (rule 22(1))

² The NZRAB first began registering architects in the second half of 2006.

³ The Registered Architects Rules 2006 (rule 24(2))

Competence review procedure

Fees are GST-inclusive

- 1 Each year the NZRAB identifies those architects that need to be reviewed.
↓
- 2 Architects with 1000 CPD points etc⁴ are deemed to have met the continuing registration requirements for 5 more years (**no fee**). → A confirmation letter is sent to these architects.
↓
- 3 The remaining architects are required to fill out competence review forms (**fee \$112.50**).
↓
- 4 An Evaluation Panel reviews the information provided by these architects. → Architects who have provided satisfactory evidence are deemed to have met the continuing registration requirements for 5 more years and are so advised.
↓
- 5 Architects who have not provided satisfactory evidence are required to attend an interactive assessment meeting with an Evaluation Panel (**fee \$506.25**). → Where the Evaluation Panel concludes that architects are safe to practice, they are deemed to have met the continuing registration requirements for 5 more years and are so advised.
↓
- 6 Architects whose interactive assessment is not persuasive are given a second interactive assessment with a different Evaluation Panel (**fee \$506.25**). → Where the second Evaluation Panel concludes that architects are safe to practice, they are deemed to have met the continuing registration requirements for 5 more years and are so advised.
↓
- 7 Where an architect's second interactive assessment is still not persuasive, the Evaluation Panel recommends to the Board that the architect's registration be suspended.
↓
- 8 The Board suspends the architect's registration. → During the following 12 months the architect can have another competence review
↓
- 9 Twelve months later the architect's registration is cancelled.

⁴ "Etc" refers to the additional requirement that of the 1000 CPD points at least 100 CPD points must be in each of the four areas of competency: Design, Documentation, Project Management and Practice Management.

Examples of competence reviews

The following examples illustrate the process outlined in the previous table and how architects will be assessed depending on their individual circumstances.

Example 1: CPD fast track

Bill has accumulated 1000 CPD points over the last five years, including 100 in each of the four areas of competency: Design, Documentation, Project Management and Practice Management.

At the beginning of the competence review process, Bill's name is drawn from the CPD database. Bill receives a letter from the NZRAB saying that he is entitled to annual registration for five more years.

As in other years, in May or June, Bill receives an invoice for his annual Certificate of Registration for \$551.25 (GST included). When that invoice is paid, the NZRAB sends Bill his certificate and records him on the Register as registered for a further 12 months. Bill is now entitled, on payment for each annual fee, to annual registration for, in total, five more years.

Example 2: Some CPD, some other PDA⁵, regular architectural work

Sue has:

- accumulated 500 CPD points
- been working full-time in New Zealand as an architect for the last five years.

Sue receives a letter from the NZRAB asking her to fill out a competence review application form. She includes in the form:

- her 500 CPD points
- her records of other professional development activities and a description of their relevance and adequacy to the architectural work that she does
- her work history over the last five years.

Sue needs to pay a fee of \$112.50 (GST included) with this application.

An Evaluation Panel reviews the relevance of the material provided. If Sue's CPD and other professional development activities are appropriate and sufficient for the work that she does, then the Evaluation Panel recommends to the Board that Sue still meets the standard.

Once the Board has confirmed that recommendation, Sue receives a letter from the NZRAB saying that she is entitled to annual registration for five more years. This is subject to her each year purchasing a Certificate of Registration, for which the annual fee is \$551.25 (GST included).

⁵ Professional development activities

Example 3: No CPD, but some other PDA, regular architectural work

Fred has:

- accumulated no CPD points
- done other professional development activities that have kept his knowledge up to date relative to the work that he does, and he has kept good records
- been working in New Zealand as an architect for at least the last five years.

In his competence review application form, Fred is not able to cite any CPD points, but he can cite other professional development activities and how these are relevant and sufficient for the services that he provides. Fred also describes his work history over the last five years. Fred needs to pay \$112.50 (GST included) with this application.

An Evaluation Panel reviews the material provided. If the professional development activities are relevant and sufficient for the work that Fred does, then Fred meets the standard.

This decision will be significantly influenced by whether Fred's professional development activities were appropriate and adequate given the kind of work he does. Also important will be whether or not the requirements of the type of work that he does have been changing significantly in recent years. If the type of work that Fred does has **not** changed technically or legally for many years, then his professional development needs will be less than for architects working in fields in which rapid change has been occurring.

Example 4: No New Zealand CPD, regular architectural work offshore, some offshore PDA

John has:

- been working in the United Kingdom as an architect for the last four years
- accumulated no New Zealand CPD points
- done professional development activities in the United Kingdom and kept good records.

John is returning to New Zealand soon and wants to stay registered here. He is not able to cite any New Zealand CPD points, but has done professional development activities in the United Kingdom. John needs to pay \$112.50 (GST included) with this application.

An Evaluation Panel reviews the material provided and concludes that, while his generic architectural knowledge is up to date, there is an issue about John's knowledge of architectural practices specific to New Zealand. The panel requires John to take part in a face-to-face interactive assessment, for which he has to pay an additional \$506.25 (GST included). John can do this by video link at his cost.

In the interactive discussion the panel seeks to confirm that John's knowledge of architectural practice in New Zealand is sufficiently up to date that he can work again here as an architect without putting the public at risk. If the discussion provides the Evaluation Panel with that assurance, the panel recommends that John meets the standard.

Example 5: Some CPD, some other PDA, not practising

Jenny has:

- been in voluntary suspension for the last five years raising a family
- during that period she has accumulated 500 CPD points and done other professional development activities for which she has kept good records.

Jenny was first registered eight years ago and worked for three years in a practice. Five years ago she resigned and took voluntary suspension. Now she is doing supervised work part-time in a practice and she wants to renew her registration. It is eight years since she was last assessed, so she needs to undertake a competence review. Jenny needs to pay \$112.50 (GST included) with this application.

An Evaluation Panel reviews the material provided and concludes that there is an issue about whether or not Jenny's knowledge are current. The panel requires Jenny to attend a face-to-face interactive assessment, for which Jenny has to pay an additional \$506.25 (GST included).

The Evaluation Panel notes that Jenny has made a significant effort to stay in touch with the profession. In the interactive discussion the panel seeks to confirm that Jenny's knowledge is sufficiently up to date that she will be able to work again as an architect without putting the public at risk. If the discussion provides the Evaluation Panel with that assurance, the panel recommends that Jenny meets the standard.

Example 6: No CPD, no other PDA, no regular architectural work

Max has:

- been previously registered in New Zealand
- accumulated no CPD points
- is not able to cite any other professional development activities
- has not been working as an architect for most of the last five years.

Max cannot cite any CPD points or other professional development activities. During the last five years Max worked for a few months in an Auckland practice and then went surf sailing in Oman and meditating in a temple in Tibet. He has just returned to New Zealand and been offered a job in one of the larger Auckland practices. Max needs to pay \$112.50 (GST included) with this application.

An Evaluation Panel reviews the material provided and concludes that there is an issue about whether or not Max's knowledge is adequate or current. The panel requires Max to attend a face-to-face interactive assessment, for which Max has to pay an additional \$506.25 (GST included).

When Max meets the panel they talk through his knowledge about architecture as it is currently practised in New Zealand. As Max has not kept himself informed of current practice, the panel recommends that Max no longer meets the standard.

Max needs to rebuild his skills and knowledge. The best path for Max may be to work in the Auckland practice under supervision for a period and then, when he is ready, to apply for initial registration again under pathway 7.⁶ The fee for initial registration this time will be \$618.75 (GST included), as Max has been registered before.

⁶ www.nzrab.org.nz/default.aspx?Page=123

The competence review in detail

The following is a more detailed description of the competence review procedure step by step, derived from the NZRAB Continuing Registration Policy.⁷

Identifying who must take part

1. At the beginning of each year the NZRAB will identify those architects who as at 30 June are due for review.
2. An architect can apply for a 12-month delay in specific circumstances.⁸

The CPD fast track

3. From the group selected for review, the NZRAB will then identify those architects who have fully participated in the NZRAB's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework over the last five years. Full participation is deemed sufficient evidence that an architect continues to meet the applicable minimum standards for registration. These architects will receive a letter from the NZRAB stating that they are entitled to annual registration for five more years. There will be no fee for this.
4. The criterion for having fully participated in the CPD framework is that the architect has gained 1000 CPD points over the last five years, including 100 in each of the four areas of competency: Design, Documentation, Project Management and Practice Management.
5. **For additional information on how the CPD points requirement works, go to page 12.**
6. The NZRAB will also identify additional architects who in less than five years have achieved 1000 CPD points, including 100 CPD points in each of the four competency areas. They too will be entitled to annual registration for five more years, if they wish.

The competence review

7. Different requirements will apply for architects who have chosen **not** to participate fully in the CPD framework (do not have 1000 CPD points etc). These architects will each have to provide their own evidence that they still meet the applicable minimum standards and therefore are safe to practise.
8. This will begin with these architects being sent a competence review application form, which will ask for specific information and to which architects will be able to attach other information that they consider relevant.

⁷ <http://www.nzrab.org.nz/default.aspx?Page=172>

⁸ Registered Architects Rule 32

The desk top assessment

9. This information will be assessed by an Evaluation Panel comprising two senior architects⁹ and an NZRAB staff member. This will be known as a “desk top” assessment.
10. A fee of \$112.50 (GST included) will be charged.
11. The Evaluation Panel will be seeking to make a holistic judgement as to whether the architect is still safe to practise.
12. If the evidence presented indicates that the architect still meets the applicable minimum standards for registration, then, subject to the Evaluation Panel’s recommendation, the NZRAB Board will determine that the architect is entitled to annual registration for five more years.
13. If doubts emerge, the Evaluation Panel may:
 - seek more written information from the architect
 - consult the architect’s referees
 - determine that an interactive assessment is required.

The interactive assessment

14. If an interactive assessment is required, the architect will be asked to attend a meeting with the Evaluation Panel. The architect will be told beforehand why the evidence already presented was insufficient. The architect may present new written evidence if he or she wishes. A fee of \$506.25 (GST included) will be charged for this.
15. At that meeting the Evaluation Panel will conduct a professional conversation with the architect. This will be similar to the interactive assessment required for initial registration, though case studies will **not** be required. However, the architect may present some work examples, if the architect thinks that will help.
16. Initially, the architect will be asked to describe:
 - the architectural work that the architect have been doing since his or her last assessment
 - the architect’s professional focus stemming from his or her regular architectural work
 - what the architect has been doing to stay professionally up to date.
17. In the conversation that follows, the Evaluation Panel will seek to make a holistic judgement about whether the architect is still safe to practise.
18. If the Evaluation Panel concludes the architect still meets the applicable minimum standards, a positive recommendation will be made to the NZRAB Board.

⁹ NZRAB Registration Assessors

19. If, however, the evidence presented is insufficient, then a second Evaluation Panel will be convened to look afresh through all the material presented and to meet with the architect again.
20. Another fee of \$506.25 (GST included) will be charged.
21. The purpose of the second assessment with a different panel is to remove any possibility of bias against the architect.

Deregistration

22. If the judgement again is that the architect does **not** meet the applicable minimum standards, then a recommendation will go to the NZRAB Board that the architect's registration should be suspended. If the recommendation is accepted, then from that point on the architect can no longer practise. After a year in suspension, if the architect has not been able to persuade the Board through another competence review that he or she is now competent, the architect's registration will be cancelled.

The required evidence

The competence review application form will ask the architect to provide:

- the architect's name, registration number, and updated contact details
- the architect's work record since his or her or her last assessment
- a description of the architect's professional focus stemming from his or her regular architectural work¹⁰
- a declaration that the architect has done appropriate professional development activities annually since the last assessment, along with evidence of this and a description of how those professional development activities were relevant and adequate
- any other information that the architect considers relevant
- professional indemnity notification of possible claims over the past five years
- details of any convictions for an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of six months or more
- a declaration that the material and evidence provided is accurate and genuine
- the contact details of two independent referees.

The following sections outline in more detail some of the information required.

The work record

The competence review application form will include a space for applicants to describe their work record. Extensive detail will not be required, but the architect should indicate the sort of work done over the last five years. Case studies or extensive details of projects will **not** be required, though architects will be entitled to provide any information that they consider relevant.

From this, the panel will judge whether there is anything unusual in the architect's work history that suggests that further scrutiny is needed.

¹⁰ See "Assessing the evidence", items 1, 2, and 3, page 10.

A description of the architect's professional focus

The architect will be asked to give a brief description of his or her professional focus in terms of the practice of architecture and/or his or her regular architectural work.

This will be needed because the Evaluation Panel will need to delineate between the generic skills and knowledge that all architects should have and the specific skills and knowledge that the applicant architect should have, given the work that he or she does. This will be especially relevant to architects who are specialists.

The panel will also assess whether over the review period the architect has been sufficiently involved in his or her area of professional focus to maintain the specific skills and knowledge required to do that work competently.

Professional development activities declaration

The application form will ask the architect to describe:

- the architect's overall strategy for keeping professionally up to date
- any CPD points the architect has accumulated over the last five years
- any other professional development activities done over the last five years
- how the CPD and other professional development activities were relevant and adequate
- anything else that the architect did to keep professionally up to date.

Other information

The architect will be entitled to present any information that the architect considers relevant. Case studies will **not** be required, but if, for example, the architect believes that a particular piece of work helps prove competence, then detailed evidence about that may be presented.

Also, if the architect has spent time in voluntary suspension, evidence about the architect's activities during that time will be considered.

Convictions

Under the Registered Architects Rules 2006 schedule 1(g), details of any serious convictions must be provided. The relevance of any conviction would be whether it indicates that an architect is unlikely to comply with the Code of Minimum Standards of Ethical Conduct for Registered Architects¹¹ or in some other way would be a risk to the public if continuing to serve as a Registered Architect.

A declaration that the information provided is truthful

Under section 25(1)(d) of the Registered Architects Act 2005, an architect can be disciplined for providing the NZRAB with false information in regard to registration.

Two independent referees

If the Evaluation Panel has any concerns based on the evidence presented, it may contact the architect's referees. Where no particular issues arise, the referees will **not** be contacted.

¹¹ <http://www.nzrab.org.nz/default.aspx?Page=165>

Assessing the evidence

The Evaluation Panel will be attempting to make a holistic judgement as to whether the architect still meets the applicable standards for registration and therefore is still safe to practise.

To do this, the Evaluation Panel will need to answer four questions.

1. Does the architect know and can the architect do the generic things required of all Registered Architects to practise safely?
2. Does the architect know and can the architect do the specific things required to undertake competently the architect's regular architectural work?
3. Is the architect self-aware in terms of the extent and limitations of his or her skills and knowledge?
4. Has the architect made a reasonable effort to keep up to date professionally?

Each of these four questions is now explained in more detail.

1) Generic skills and knowledge required of all architects

All architects need to know and be able to do certain things, regardless of the specific work that they do on a day-to-day basis. The Evaluation Panel will need to be satisfied that the architect:

- has a sound knowledge of the Code of Minimum Standards of Ethical Conduct for Registered Architects and the principles behind them
- has a sound overview of the architectural process
- understands, in broad terms, the statutory and regulatory framework that applies to the built environment and the architectural process in New Zealand
- has good communications skills.

These requirements are drawn from section 7 of the Registered Architects Rules 2006 and the National Competency Standards in Architecture.

2) Specific knowledge required for the work that the architect does

The Evaluation Panel will also need to determine whether or not the architect is competent in terms of the specifics of his or her regular architectural work. The architect will be expected to define the area or areas in which is the architect is currently working. If the architect's regular work involves specialisation, the architect should have more in-depth skills and knowledge in those areas than at the time of initial registration.

3) Self-awareness

Architects need to be self-aware in terms of the architectural work that they are currently doing, the skills and knowledge that they have, and their limitations. The Evaluation Panel needs to be confident that if the architect receives a commission to undertake work for which he or she lacks experience, the architect will be cautious and seek professional assistance.

If an architect has not been working for some years, it may be that the architect currently has no specific professional focus. An example could be an architect who has been in voluntary suspension. This does **not** rule out continuing registration. In that case the caution required when architects take on work outside their normal

professional focus would be required when the architect takes on **any** architectural work. The Evaluation Panel would look for the appropriate attitude and strategies in this situation.

4) Making a reasonable effort to stay up to date

The Evaluation Panel will need to be satisfied that the architect has made a reasonable effort to stay professionally up to date. Architects will need to present the panel with evidence that they have been undertaking appropriate professional development activities.

Professional development activities will be interpreted broadly and, for example, can include:

- participation in relevant CPD
- other independent study or research
- group or individual activities in the workplace designed to support or extend the architect's skills and knowledge
- attendance at relevant conferences and workshops
- relevant liaison or participation in the profession's activities.

Note that for the desk top and/or interactive competence review, the number of CPD points accumulated is **not** the only benchmark. The Evaluation Panel will be looking for an overall indication that the architect is engaged with the profession and doing sensible things to keep up to date. The measure of what is appropriate will vary from architect to architect depending on the work that each architect does and how much the skills and knowledge required for that type of work change over time.

Professional development activities can include things done at the workplace or elsewhere and during or outside normal working hours. All professional development activities that the architect has done over the previous five years should be cited.

Keeping a diary or log of this is very sensible.

Continuing professional development

The NZRAB provides the CPD framework to help architects keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Participation in CPD also helps architects meet the requirements for continuing registration.

The CPD framework is a mechanism by which each architect's professional development activities can be recorded **quantitatively** using a points system. Within this framework there are so-called scheduled CPD events which architects can attend and to which points have been assigned, and individual CPD activities that architects initiate and to which points are assigned once activities have been completed. Architects record their CPD participation into a database through an individual, password-protected webpage that is assigned to each architect.

How much each architect uses this resource is an individual decision and responsibility. Merely collecting CPD points is not the goal. As a professional, each architect should have a strategy for staying up to date. The important thing is for each architect to do CPD that is relevant and then to make sure it is included in the architect's CPD record.

The CPD points required

For automatic ongoing registration the five-year period in which each architect must accrue 1000 CPD points will be staggered six months earlier than the architect’s five-year competence review cycle. In other words, each architect’s CPD accrual period will be 1 January to 31 December over five years, six months ahead of the architect’s 1 July to 30 June five-year review cycle.

This is necessary because the NZRAB will need six months to undertake desktop and/or interactive competence review assessments for architects who have not achieved 1000 CPD points. Before that can happen, the NZRAB must separate those who need desktop and/or interactive competence review assessments from those who are entitled to automatic ongoing registration via their CPD participation.

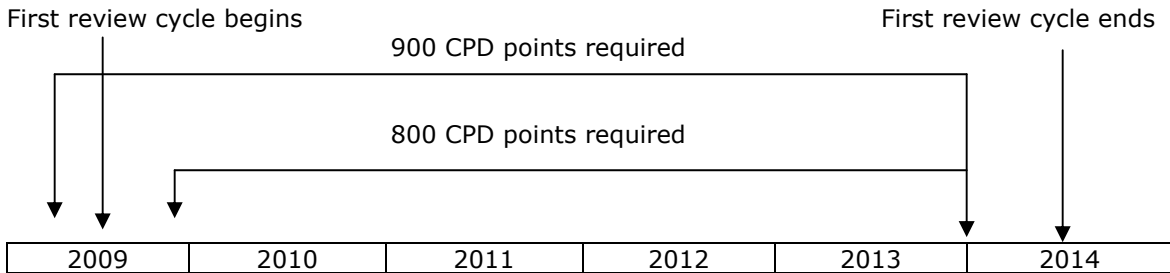
However, this creates an issue, in that architects in their first review cycle after initial registration will have less than five years to accrue CPD points before the 31 December deadline, given that they could not do CPD before initial registration.

To solve this, the 1000 points requirement will be reduced on a pro-rata basis for architects in their first review cycle depending on how long they have had to accrue CPD points. This means for automatic ongoing registration:

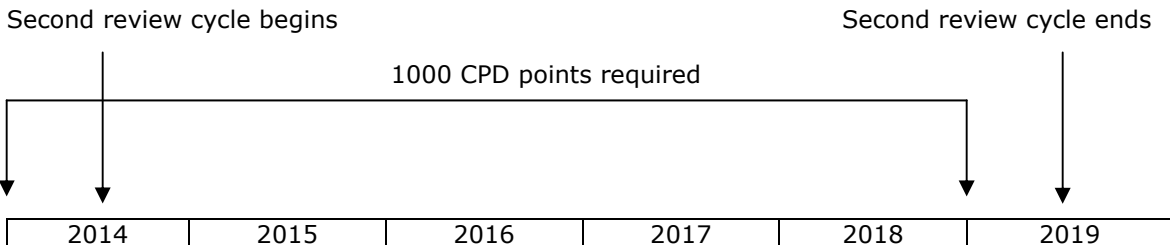
- architects assessed for **initial** registration in the first half of the year will have to accrue 900 CPD points by 31 December four-and-a-half years later
- architects assessed for **initial** registration in the second half of the calendar year will have to accrue 800 CPD points by 31 December four years later.

For example, for automatic ongoing registration, architects **first** registered in the first half of 2009 will need to accrue 900 CPD points by 31 December 2013. Architects **first** registered in the second half of 2009 will need to accrue 800 CPD points by 31 December 2013. The diagrams below illustrate this.

Architects in their first review cycle starting 2009



Architects in their second review cycle starting 2014



Addendum (September 2009)

Since this booklet was published, the NZRAB's initial registration procedures have been further refined. From 2009 onwards, architects whose initial registration assessments take place in the second half of the calendar year will first be registered from 1 January in the following year. The benefit of this is their fee for their first annual Certificate of Registration will be halved as a result.

This means for automatic ongoing registration these architects will have a 1000 CPD points target, including 100 in each of the 4 units of competency, given that they will have 5 years to complete it (see Fig 1 below), as will architects in their subsequent review cycles (see Fig 3).

Architects who are assessed for initial registration in the first half of the calendar year will be registered on 1 July of that year and for automatic ongoing registration will still have a 900 CPD points target, including 90 in each of the 4 units of competency, to be completed over 4.5 years (see Fig 2).

Fig 1

Architects first registered on 1 January

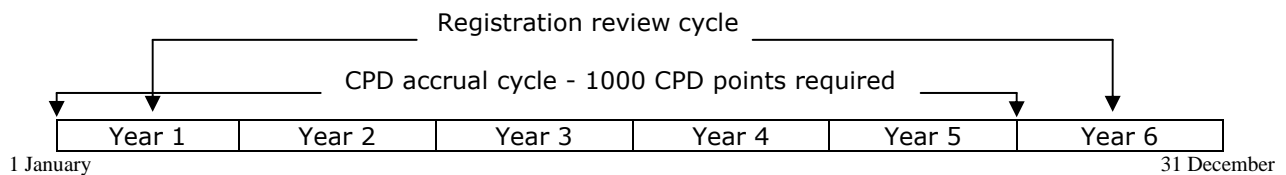


Fig 2

Architects first registered on 1 July

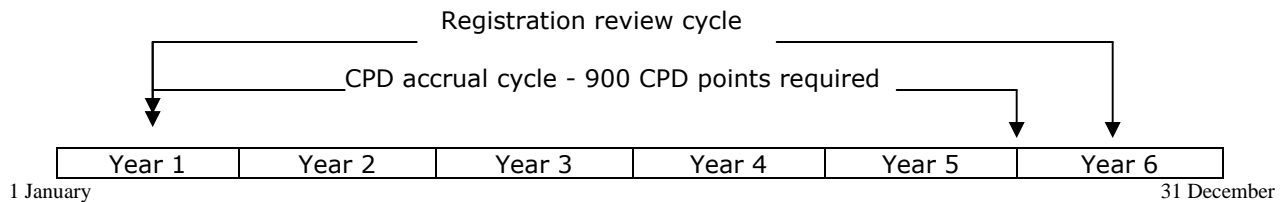
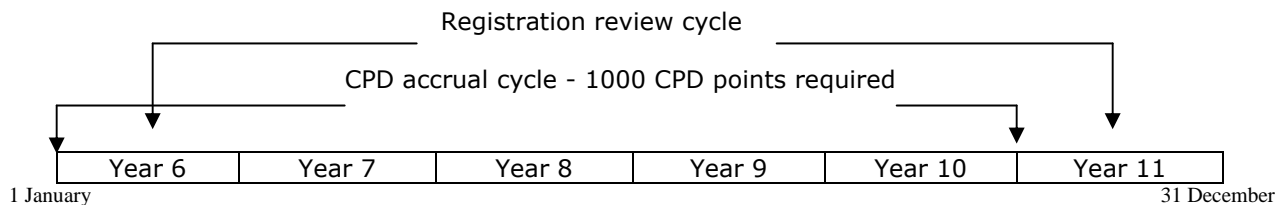


Fig 3

Architects in their subsequent review cycles



Architects first registered in the second half of the calendar year during 2006, 2007 and 2008 for automatic ongoing registration will continue to have the 800 CPD points target, including 80 points in each of the 4 units of competency, over 4 years, as assigned to them earlier.

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