

Schedule NZ — 2021 NSCA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SHEET

The consultation and engagement process raised a series of **FAQs** addressing professional concerns.

Will I be deregistered if I don't speak te reo Māori fluently?

No. The competency requirements do not expect architects to become fluent in te reo Māori. Instead, the focus is on understanding when and how to appropriately engage with cultural advisors and tangata whenua. Practitioners are expected to recognise the significance of cultural considerations in their projects and know when to seek appropriate cultural guidance. Basic pronunciation skills and understanding of common architectural terms in te reo may be helpful, but fluency is not required for professional registration.

How long will I have to develop these competencies?

The New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) recognises that developing cultural competency is a gradual process that varies for each practitioner. Extended timeframes will be provided for implementation, with a phased approach allowing several years for practitioners to build these skills. Continuing professional development programmes will be established to support ongoing learning throughout an architect's career, rather than expecting immediate competency demonstration.

Are these requirements just about being “politically correct”?

These competencies are grounded in New Zealand's constitutional framework through Te Tiriti o Waitangi and align with the [2021 National Standard of Competency for Architects](#) (2021 NSCA). They reflect legitimate professional obligations similar to understanding building codes or environmental regulations — essential knowledge for practising effectively in the New Zealand context. The focus is on professional competence rather than political positioning.

Will every project require extensive cultural consultation?

No. The competency requirements are contextual and proportionate. For smaller residential projects, demonstrating cultural competency might simply mean understanding the site's cultural significance and knowing when consultation is appropriate. Larger or more sensitive projects may require more extensive engagement. The key is having the knowledge to make informed decisions about WHEN and HOW to engage appropriately.

What support will be available to help me develop these competencies?

The NZRAB is committed to working with providers of CPD for Registered Architects and Architectural Graduates to develop a programme specifically designed for cultural competency in Aotearoa New Zealand.

How will these competencies be assessed fairly?

Assessment frameworks will be developed with clear, objective criteria and practical examples. The focus will be on demonstrating understanding of when cultural engagement is needed and showing evidence of appropriate consultation processes, rather than subjective cultural judgements. Regular review and refinement of assessment methods will ensure fairness and consistency across all practitioners.

Does this privilege Māori culture over other cultures in New Zealand?

The special recognition of te ao Māori reflects the unique constitutional relationship established through Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which creates specific professional obligations. This is distinct from general multicultural considerations and aligns with similar recognition in other professions. Understanding this constitutional framework is part of professional competence in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, similar to how practitioners in other countries must understand their local legal and cultural frameworks.

What if my clients don't want cultural consultation?

Professional competency includes providing informed advice to clients about all aspects that may affect their projects. Just as architects advise on building code requirements regardless of client preferences, understanding cultural considerations is part of our professional responsibility. This doesn't mean imposing unwanted services, but rather ensuring clients are informed about relevant cultural factors that may affect their projects.

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