NEW ZEALAND
Registered Architects Board
Te Poari Kaihoahoa Ngaio Rēhita o Aotearoa

Policy on Annual Registrations and Voluntary Suspension

Version reference:	1.1
Effective date:	6 October 2026
Legislative reference:	Sections of the Registered Architects Act 2005 Parts of the Registered Architects Rules 2006

Purpose

1. This policy defines and describes annual certificates of registration, voluntary suspension and expired registrations.

2. It outlines the requirements for a registered architect to renew their annual certificate of registration (ACR) and to enter and exit voluntary suspension. It also outlines the implications of late ACR payments and failure to submit 5-yearly competence review documentation.

3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Initial Registration and Continuing Registration policies.

Governance and Administration

Annual Registration

4. Under the Registered Architects Act 2005 (the Act), Registration is defined as holding both registration and an Annual Certificate of Registration (ACR). A person is not registered for the purposes of the Act if their registration is suspended (voluntarily or not) or has expired.

5. It is a statutory requirement that architects hold a current Annual Certificate of Registration (ACR) in order to be able to use the title 'registered architect' (sections 6 and 7 of the Act). The fee for obtaining an ACR is set out in Schedule 2 of the Rules.

6. ACRs are issued for one year, from 1 July to 30 June, or for a part year if the ACR payment is received after 31 July.

7. An architect can elect to put their registration in voluntary suspension by completing the Voluntary Suspension Request form.

8. A person whose registration is in voluntary suspension will appear on the Register under the category of voluntary suspension, but as they are not registered for the purposes of the Act, they cannot use the title 'architect' if they are continuing to engage in building

services (designing buildings, preparing plans and specifications for buildings, or supervising the construction of buildings).

9. An architect can elect to cancel their registration, and have their name removed from the register. As with voluntary suspension, a previously registered architect cannot use the title architect if they are engaging in building services (as defined in paragraph 8) and cannot use any words, initials or abbreviations that could reasonably cause any person to believe that person is a registered architect.

10. An architect's registration lapses and they cease to be registered if:

    a. they fail to pay for their ACR and do not elect to enter voluntary suspension, or

    b. their period of voluntary suspension expires before they either revive their registration or request that their registration be cancelled.

11. For administrative purposes, lapsed registrations are categorised as 'expired'. As 'expired' is not a formal registration status, it is not a searchable status on the public register.

Procedures

Annual Certificate of Registration

12. Invoices are issued to all registered architects for payment of their ACR in May, unless the architect has indicated that they wish to enter voluntary suspension or cancel their registration at the conclusion of the ACR year (30 June).

13. To enable the NZRAB's internal processes to be undertaken in time to renew every registered architect's ACR by 1 July, architects should ensure that their payment has been made to the NZRAB, accompanied by their correctly spelled surname and their registration number, at least 10 working days prior to the expiration of their ACR.

14. If an architect fails to pay their ACR by 30 June, their registration lapses, i.e. they cease to be a registered architect and cannot use the title. For administrative purposes their registration is recorded as 'expired'.

15. Newly registered architects and architects coming out of voluntary suspension part way through the ACR year are charged a pro rata fee, dependent on which month they make payment for an ACR.

16. ACR fees are not refundable, i.e., an architect cannot request a refund of the ACR fee in the event they cancel their registration or request to enter voluntary suspension part way through the year.

Voluntary Suspension

17. An architect must submit their voluntary suspension notification at least seven working days before commencement of voluntary suspension (rule 41 of the Rules). The Board provides a form for architects to signal their intention to enter voluntary suspension.

18. An architect may request voluntary suspension for one or more consecutive 12-month periods, up to a maximum continuous period of five years, in accordance with Rule 42. The periods do not need to run from 1 July to 30 June, although this is often the most practical option because an ACR remains current until 30 June. The maximum five-year voluntary suspension period does not override competence review requirements. Where a competence review falls due before the end of a voluntary suspension period, the architect must return to active registration and complete the review before the due date.

19. An architect cannot remain in voluntary suspension for more than five continuous years. Before the end of that period, they must either revive their registration or request cancellation. If they do not, the Board may remove them from the Register and any future application for registration must be made through the pathway for formerly registered New Zealand architects. There is no limit on the total amount of voluntary suspension an architect may take over their career, provided each period is separated by a period of active registration. Voluntary suspension cannot be used to avoid competence review requirements

20. NZRAB will contact architects to remind them when they are approaching the end of a five-year voluntary suspension period. However, it remains the architect's responsibility to comply with Rule 42.

21. A competence review cannot be completed while an architect is in voluntary suspension. Competence review due dates continue to apply during voluntary suspension. An architect must revive their registration before their competence review becomes due so that the review can be completed while they remain registered. If the architect does not return to active registration before the review becomes due, or before the expiry of any approved deferral, they are no longer eligible to remain in voluntary suspension. Their registration will be treated as expired, and they must apply through the process for formerly registered New Zealand architects if they wish to return to the Register.

22. NZRAB will contact architects in voluntary suspension when their competence review is approaching and invite them to revive their registration before the review is due.

Reviving a voluntarily suspended registration

23. Although the period of voluntary suspension specified in the architect's notification must be in 12 month blocks an architect can request to revive their registration within a 12 month period, i.e., they do not need to wait for the expiration of their period of voluntary suspension.

24. An architect revives their registration simply by contacting NZRAB (registration@nzrab.org.nz) and paying for their ACR, provided less than five years have elapsed since they were first registered or since their last successful competence review. In this instance, the Board relies on the architect having passed their competency review (or if applicable the initial registration assessment) to determine that they meet the minimum standards for registration.

25. However, if by the time a person wishes to revive their registration, the due date for their five-yearly competence review has already passed, they will need to apply for registration as a formerly registered NZ architect to allow the Board to assess that they meet the minimum standard for registration before they can be granted an ACR.

Expired Registration

26. If the fee for an architect's ACR is not received and processed by the close of 30 June in any year, the architect's registration expires and they cease to be registered.

27. The Act does not contemplate late ACR payments and lapsed or expired registrations. Rather, the statutory expectation is that architects either remain registered (with a current ACR), have had their registration suspended by the Board, have gone into voluntary suspension under rule 41, or have had their registration cancelled under section 14 of the Act.

28. Strict compliance with the Act and Rules would likely require the NZRAB to treat all people whose ACR has expired as former New Zealand registered architects, if they wish to be registered again. This seems unduly harsh, so the Board has established a grace period of six6 months for payment of the annual ACR fee. However, the onus is on each architect to ensure that they always hold a current ACR, as they cannot legally practise as an architect without one. This grace period is only applicable to architects who have submitted their five yearly competence review form.

29. In summary, the six6 month grace period only applies if the following to conditions are met:

    a. annual ACR fee is paid (and processed by the NZRAB Executive) by 31 December; and

    b. the person is not overdue their 5 yearly competence review.

        i. If the architect was due for their competence review that same year, their continuing registration competence review form and supporting documentation must have been submitted by 30 June.

30. If at the end of the grace period the architect has not paid for their ACR, or requested that their registration be put in voluntary registration or if the grace period doesn't apply, the person will need to apply for registration under the procedure for Former New Zealand Registered Architects.

Document control

#	Date	Author position	Approval method	Detailed changes/description
1.0	14 June 2022	Executive Officer: Public Protection	Board Meeting	Information on voluntary suspension in the continuing registration policy redrafted into an independent policy. The new policy was updated to include the requirements to renew an ACR, and to reflect that a person cannot undergo a Competence Review whilst in voluntary suspension or if their registration has expired.
1.1	6 October 2026	Registration Manager	Board meeting	Voluntary suspension updated to clarify 5-year limit expectation and continuing registration review expectations.