

Critical Analysis Report (CAR) Guidance

Offering an all-encompassing 'One size fits all' formula is not possible or desirable and this advice is for guidance only. The diversity of practices and the variety of projects in terms of size, scale, location, procurement routes means that all CARs are unique and generic guidance is not appropriate. We have set out some advice below, you should remember that although the CAR is based on your direct experience, in order for you to put it into a broader professional context you will almost certainly need to do some research and investigation. Below is the advice that is in the handbook, followed by some more detailed advice on the structure and format of the document:

"The Critical Analysis Report (CAR) contributes to your professional portfolio and is a key element by which you can demonstrate your knowledge, understanding, skill, and competence. The CAR is a 10,000 word analytical, in-depth report intended to demonstrate a candidate's professional judgement and will be a critique of the architect's powers, responsibilities and duties in the delivery of architectural services using a live project, normally within the UK.

The report will provide rigorous evidence-based analyses, drawing on direct experience and structured research, to create a holistic appraisal of the architect's role in delivering a project. This is achieved through addressing and commenting on the challenges, strengths and weaknesses, and learning outcomes in specific processes, situations or issues arising; these will be identified by the candidate in agreement with the tutor.

The account should be supported by personal reflection and discussion, while drawing critical conclusions on the delivery of the aspirations of the parties involved, lessons learnt, and successes and failures of processes and relationships.

The study will normally include the examination of some or all of the industry standard work stages /procedures including appointment, briefing, procurement strategy, tendering delivery/administration and completion processes of a project. The content of the report will vary depending on the nature, scale and delivery of the project chosen. However, very exceptionally, if the candidate has no direct contract administration experience the CAR may be used to investigate and demonstrate an understanding of specific aspects of delivery of a project through shadowing, research and speculation.

The selection of the project topic, which the candidate has been engaged with, should be made with the knowledge and agreement of the candidate's employer. The proposed topic will then be agreed with the tutor/PSA at the preliminary meeting.

You should be aware that any discussions with your PSA in the tutorials, during the preparation stages of the CAR, and with the Professional Examiners and External Examiner at the oral examination are confidential. Only the tutor/PSA and the examiners get to see the CAR. As you may have already become aware there are boxes of examples, which are available for, your perusal. It is only with the express permission of candidates (who should check with their offices) that exemplars be made available to future candidates for reference.

Typical CAR structure

The traditional format for a CAR is to review the delivery of a project through all work stages ('life cycle') but is not a diary or 'log'. We would refer you in particular to the requirement for two in depth studies to be incorporated into the CAR - one in the early stages up to mobilization and one post mobilization.

However, because this ideal model is not always reflected in the way in which projects are procured and delivered, you may, with your tutor's agreement, wish to focus on specific work stages or procurement routes, but remember you must set these into context and be aware of the broader issues surrounding the delivery of the project.

A project using a traditional procurement route and standard form of contract is a good vehicle for a CAR because you will be able to demonstrate the understanding of contract administration and the architect's roles and responsibilities. However, it is recognised that variations on Design and Build, Management Contracting etc. are commonly used in the construction industry therefore a CAR based on these types of procurement routes is acceptable. However the document will still need to demonstrate adequate experience and a depth of knowledge and there may be a value in comparing the procurement route of your project with other systems.

'More than One' Project

Where you are not able to follow one project through all work stages - a complete 'life cycle' - it is acceptable to consider two projects to demonstrate an understanding of issues at different work stages. This approach can be more difficult and you should be careful not to leave any significant gaps in your coverage of the criteria. You should also be aware that you might be involved in a duplication of effort and this should not be reflected in the content of the CAR.

Recent feed back from examination boards has been less than favourable in this method and we would caution you in the adoption of this approach.

Incomplete Life Cycle

Should you wish to write a CAR based around a project that has an incomplete 'life cycle' i.e. it only covers some of the work stages, you could hypothetically speculate on the outcome of outstanding stages, e.g. practical completion, requests for extensions of time etc. or alternatively you may be able to demonstrate in your PEDRs or PDA that you have gained the relevant experience and understanding elsewhere of all the areas as set out in the Criteria.

Candidates Using the Same Project in One Office

Sometimes candidates are working on the same project in the office. In this instance, with the agreement of the tutor/PSA, candidates can jointly produce the background/context parts of the CAR. It should be made clear in the submission that this is a 'group effort'. Candidates should complete their CAR by selecting different issues/incident.

Shadowing

Shadowing is very exceptionally an acceptable approach to the production of a CAR. It is essentially a means of obtaining the understanding required to produce this document through observation and research, without necessarily gaining this through direct experience. Candidates should however remember that this is a compromise and not welcomed by the examiners. Our advice is that you should only consider this as a last resort. Experience tells us that a CAR based on shadowing is more difficult and requires more effort to achieve the same end result. At a practical / office level the contention is that; as an employee and fee earner, you cannot be working effectively on a project you have been employed to contribute to, and shadowing another project at the same time. Your office supervisor/ project architect will need to ensure that you have access to project meetings, site visits and contract administration correspondence to ensure that you fully understand the issues as and when they arise.

With the advice of your tutor you may consider combining shadowing and / or desktop research with the 'more than one project' approach described above.

'Particular' Experience

Where a candidate has particular experience of a specialist nature, which may be considered a suitable topic for a CAR this should be agreed with the tutor/PSA. However the candidate must ensure that the PDA/PEDR/evidence of experience demonstrates a suitable level of engagement at all of the work stages.

Complex Projects

Candidates working on very large complex projects, sometimes spanning a number of years can still use these to create excellent CARs. To be successful it will be necessary to focus in detail on a specific area with which you have been personally involved. However you will be required to set your topics into context and this will probably be through research rather than first hand experience. Again you will need to demonstrate the breadth of your overall experience elsewhere.

Non UK Projects

Many candidates are working for international practices or for UK practices that have a significant overseas workload. Work experience gained in these offices can produce a good CAR but you should not forget that the most successful way to do this is to compare and contrast with normal UK procurement and delivery /practice. The success of these CARs lies in the comparative analysis, which can also provide the candidate with the opportunity of demonstrating an understanding of 'best practice'.

It is important that you remember the examination and registration is predicated on competence to practice in an UK environment and that the CAR must address UK issues. You will need to demonstrate competence through your PEDR/ PDA experience." Professional Studies Handbook 2016 pg. 37-39

Structure

Remember that you are writing about something you are very familiar with, the examiners reading your CAR for the first time will know nothing about the project so it is essential that you put the project in context and include key information at the very beginning.

Review advice on essay writing. A sound structure is essential to a successful CAR. Frequently, complex issues and scenarios are investigated which will require a logical sequence of presentation. The CAR can begin with a clear abstract stating what the project is; where it is; the methodology; aims and objectives and the key issues you are going to focus on and explore. This section is followed by an introduction/context and background. The main body of the report examines and analyses specific issues. There should be a strong concluding section that draws together the learning outcomes derived from the overall CAR, in the context of the aims and objectives described in the introduction. In the concluding section you may wish to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the processes addressed, and review the professional insight that you have gained from the experience.

Not all CARs will follow the same structure. Remember to make sure that you are continually reviewing your progress to ensure coverage of all the areas you have chosen to explore. One of the major reasons these documents fail to satisfy the professional examiners is where there are gaps in the CAR, if you are going to only focus on specific aspects of your project this should be clearly stated in the abstract or in the introduction right at the beginning

We have indicated some approximate numbers of words in brackets for guidance and to help you understand the relative importance of these sections.

Cover

On the front cover Include:

- Your Name
- Identify your document as the Critical Analysis Report
- Include the location of the project and name of the practice, type of project (Commercial / Residential, Refurb / New Build, Private / Public etc) all on the cover.
- Include the word count
- Make it clear in which session you are submitting in: e.g. Summer 2016
- Include the name of the course and school: Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice and Management Part 3. The Bartlett School of Architecture.

Table of Contents

Abstract (250 words)

This will describe the CAR and look at the aims and objectives and your methodology/approach to study. Include your choice of issues /points of interest /incidents that you are covering and maybe give an overview of your involvement and indication of your conclusions.

List of Abbreviations

Keep to a minimum and be careful that these are used sensibly, remember to correctly reference these in the text when you first use them.

Project Summary (500 words)

This should be a single page and should list key facts to enable the reader and in particular the professional examiners to get an overview of the project/subject of the CAR. Include the project name, building type, location, brief description of the project i.e. what is the form of contract, procurement route, costs, key players including the client and the project team, contractor, the programme, significant dates and any other essential information. Be careful to use appropriate words to describe these key facts. You might also consider providing a timeline diagram of key events.

Having established firstly what the CAR aims to do and given the reader a background to the project which forms the basis of the study then you can proceed with the CAR.

Main Text /Context/Background/introduction (3000 words)

This section should include a more detailed description of the topics and issues you are planning to address in your CAR and should provide the reader with sufficient information to help them understand the remainder of the document and to inform them of your intended scope. This section should cover some or all of the following topics, not necessarily in this order and with the emphasis on the issues you wish to explore. There may well be other topics you wish to include. This is not a prescriptive or exhaustive list. (see next page

- **Project Environment** - the practice, client, other stakeholders, procurement strategy
- **Project Description** - source of the project, e.g OJEU, competition, networking, client's aspirations and brief - original and final versions
- **Architects Appointment** /fee/management and resources planning, roles and responsibilities
- **The Project Team** appointments, dynamic, communication and analysis of their contribution, roles and responsibilities
- **Economics** - funding issues, budget estimates, cost planning, value engineering, cost reporting contract, valuations, final account figures
- **Design Development**, consultants' input, design changes
- **Regulatory Issues** – Planning and development, heritage, Sustainability, Building Regulations, Inclusive Design, Party Walls/ adjoining owners, property law rights, leases/ licences, statutory undertakers etc.
- **Health and Safety Issues – CDM**
- **Practice Management** - QA systems, information exchange, resource tracking
- **BIM**
- **Selection of Form of Contract** - procurement routes, tendering procedures, contractor/ sub-contractors
- **Construction period** - the role of the architect may have to be re-visited e.g novation etc. site relationships and communications, quality management, managing design changes
- **Contract Administration** - contractors and subcontractors, variations/change orders, valuations, delays, claims etc.
- **Practical Completion**, post completion, feedback systems

In Depth Studies (4000 words)

The CAR should discuss in detail at least two specific issues / incidents / specific areas of study. These sections may choose to illustrate a particular part of the process. They should make reference to legislation and management procedures. It is important to remember that they do not necessarily need to focus on the things that have gone wrong, but can be used to exemplify best practice. These sections can be presented separately or integrated within the text as long as they are clearly identified. These may be integrated into the main body of the CAR as appropriate. We would suggest that one of these is pre-mobilisation and one is post mobilisation.

Analysis, critique, observations and discussion (1750 words)

A CAR is not a diary of events and must always have a substantial amount of your own critical analyses. This is essential to enable you to demonstrate that you have understood the requirements of the Part 3 criteria.

In the presentation of the CAR it may assist the reader if you make it clear which areas are the main body of the text and which are your commentary. This can be done by a change of font style or colour, graphic layout, separate columns, footnotes etc. You can decide how to do this, as there are no strict rules on how this is achieved.

There should always be a critical section at the end bringing together the analysis and conclusion. Your approach to this will develop with your text and it is never too early to think about how your professional examiner will be reading and assessing your document.

As noted in the heading to this section your analysis may also take the form of observation or reflection and the you may want to consider some of the following:-

- A discussion of the successful or negative aspects of the project which may go back to early decisions and which then have impacted on the eventual outcome
- The obvious reflection may be on the lessons learned
- Why did the 'problems' arise? How were they dealt with?
- Were there any decisions made /choices taken that impacted on the outcome?
- The performance of key players
- What were the strengths and weakness of the project and the various processes?
- What did you, the client, the practice, the contractor, the wider society/end user get out of it?

Conclusion

(500 words)

This section should draw together the learning outcomes and relate back to the aims and objectives that you set yourself at the beginning. Be careful not to end abruptly!

Bibliography

Appendices – keep to a minimum

Formatting

You will submit two printed professionally bound copies of the CAR, which must be in A4 format. They can be either in portrait or landscape. The document should be printed double sided. A high standard of spelling, punctuation and style is expected. Clarity and legibility in text and illustration are paramount. A minimum text point size of 11 is recommended. You should be careful to consider the choice of font style and ensure legibility. Pages must be numbered and illustrations captioned. One copy of the CAR will be returned to the candidate following the oral examination. You will also be provided with USB sticks for soft copies of all work.

Word Count

The word count for the CAR should be no more than 10,000 words. Above the maximum, penalties apply. The word count includes the main body of the text plus footnotes or endnotes. It does not include the bibliography, any appendices, figure legends, tables, and front matter.

Appendices

Appendices are permitted when supplementary material is required or relevant, e.g. Programme, Planning application, extracts from the contract etc. Appendices must not be used to stretch the main exposition

Penalties for Over-length Coursework

Assessed work should not exceed the prescribed maximum length of 10,000 words. For work that exceeds the maximum length by less than 10% the mark will be reduced by ten percentage marks; but the penalized mark will not be reduced below the pass mark, assuming the work merited a pass. **For work that exceeds the specified maximum length by 10% or more, a mark of zero will be recorded.**

Assessment of the PDA and CAR

Pairs of professional examiners mark the submissions for Module 6. Therefore all work is marked twice. The PDA and CAR will be given a Graded Assessment.

The Professional Examiners will assess these in two stages, they will have agreed on a preliminary /formative mark before the Oral Examination. Then following your performance in the Oral they then report a summative and final mark at the Examination Board.

Assessment Mark Sheets for CAR attached: