
Critical Analysis Report (CAR) Guidance 2017

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 the candidate’s professional portfolio and is a key element by which they can demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skill, and competence. The CAR is a 10,000 word analytical, in-depth report intended to demonstrate a candidate’s professional judgment, 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 CAR addresses and comments 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 may normally include the examination of the delivery industry standard work stages/procedures including appointment, briefing, procurement strategy, tendering and delivery/administration, and completion processes of a project. 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 CAR is essentially work-based, research-led learning. 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.

Candidates should be aware and assured that any discussions with their 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. There are boxes of examples 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

The traditional format for a CAR is to review the delivery of a project through all work stages ('life cycle'). Candidates should note in particular the requirement for two in-depth studies to be incorporated in the CAR – one in the early stages up to mobilisation and one post-mobilisation.

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

A project using a traditional procurement route and form of contract is a good vehicle for a CAR because it enables the candidate to demonstrate the understanding of contract administration and the architect's roles and responsibilities.

It is recognised that variations on design and build, management contracting, etc., are commonly used in the construction industry, and 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 of traditional procurement routes.

The work should be illustrated. Candidates will be penalised if they exceed the word limit. Appendices should be kept to a minimum.

'More than one' project

Where candidates 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 candidates should be careful not to leave any significant gaps in their coverage of the criteria. They should also be aware that this approach might involve a duplication of effort, and this should not be reflected in the content of the CAR.

Recent feedback from examination boards has been less than favourable to this approach, and we would caution candidates in its adoption.

Incomplete life cycle

If the CAR is based around a project that has an incomplete 'life cycle' (i.e. it only covers some of the work stages) candidates could hypothetically, if appropriate, speculate on the outcome of outstanding stages (e.g. practical completion, requests for extensions of time) or, alternatively, candidates may be able to demonstrate in their PEDRs or PDA that they have gained the relevant experience and understanding on other projects of all the areas set out in the criteria.

Candidates using the same project in one office at the same time

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/incidents.

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 is not welcomed by the examiners. Our advice is that candidates 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 a pass.

At a practical/office level the contention is that, as an employee and fee earner, candidates cannot be working effectively on a project they have been employed to contribute to while shadowing another project at the same time. Their office supervisor/project architect will need to ensure that they have access to project meetings, site visits and contract administration correspondence to ensure that they have a full understanding of issues as and when they arise. With the advice of their tutor, candidates

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 that 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 the work normally undertaken by an architect in practice and meets the ARB/RIBA criteria.

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, candidates will be required to set their topics in context, and this will probably be through research rather than first-hand experience. Again, they will need to demonstrate the breadth of their 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 good CARs, but do 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 provide the candidate with the opportunity of demonstrating an understanding of 'best practice'.

It is important to recognise that the examination and registration is predicated on competence to practice in a UK environment and that the CAR must somehow address UK issues. Candidates will need to demonstrate competence through your PEDR/PDA experience. Note that recent feedback from examination boards has been less than favourable to this approach, and we would caution candidates in its adoption."

Adapted from the Bartlett Professional Studies Handbook 2017 pg. 36-38

What a CAR is not/what not to do when writing a CAR:

- 1 a chronological 'diary'/list of activities/events relating to a project.
- 2 a CAR does not have to follow all RIBA workstages 0-7.
- 3 You do not have to have been personally involved with all stages.
- 4 Do not quote or put in boxes chunks of information or diagrams from standard documents/books unless they have specific relevance to the text.

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 summary. 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 on this project.

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 unexplained 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 below some approximate numbers of words in brackets for guidance and to help you understand the relative importance of these sections. In addition you should use standard academic referencing systems when referring to published documents.

Note: the word count includes the main body of the text plus footnotes or endnotes. It does not include the bibliography, abstract, any appendix, figure legends, tables, front matter, and non-substantive elements.

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. Autumn 2017
- 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 your aims and objectives and your methodology/approach to the CAR. 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.

Introduction/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.

- **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
- **Architect's 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**, being sure to address current legislation
- **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 on lightweight paper (not more than 80 gsm) and be 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. You may also be asked to submit a copy on moodle for archive purposes.

Word Count

The word count for the CAR should be no more than 10,000 words. Above the maximum, penalties apply (see below). The word count includes the main body of the text plus footnotes or endnotes. It does not include the bibliography, abstract, any appendix, figure legends, tables, front matter, and non-substantive elements.

Appendices

Appendices are permitted when supplementary material is referred to in the text and is 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% will be capped at a pass.** The penalised mark will not fall below the pass mark assuming the work merited a pass.

Penalties for Late Submission of Coursework

Where course work is not submitted by a published deadline, the following penalties will apply:

- a) A penalty of 10 percentage marks will be applied to coursework submitted up to 2 working days after the submission date.
- b) If coursework is submitted more than 2 working days after the deadline, but less than 5 working days, it will be capped at a pass mark.
- c) Work submitted after the 5th working day: a mark of zero will be recorded.
- d) The penalised mark will not fall below the pass mark assuming the work merited a pass.

Where there are extenuating circumstances that have been recognized these penalties will not apply until the agreed extension period has been exceeded. In the case of coursework that is submitted late and is also over length, the greater of the two penalties apply.

Extenuating Circumstances

Candidates who wish to have extenuating circumstances (e.g. dyslexia, medical conditions, disabilities) considered during the examination process and for module submissions must notify the Course Administrator *in advance* of submission and provide appropriate documentation along with the extenuating circumstances form. The consideration of extenuating circumstances will follow the UCL procedures. Candidates may also wish to discuss with their tutor strategies for dealing with any ongoing conditions.

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.

The Assessment Mark Sheet for the CAR is attached.

Updated September 2017

CRITICAL ANALYSIS REPORT (CAR) MARK SHEET (2017)

Candidate Name:		Examiner:
AWARD	KEY QUALITIES OF CAR	COMMENTS
DISTINCTION	Very High 100% High 90%	In addition to the qualities of a Merit level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the exceptional quality in relation to the criteria listed in the 70-89%. Outstanding critical insights and thought provoking arguments Evidence of ground breaking research Presentation to an exceptionally high standard
	Mid 80%	In addition to the qualities of a Merit level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear understanding of the evidence Well informed by a wide range of relevant ideas Excellent analysis, arguments and explanations Exceptionally good structure
	Low 70%	In addition to the qualities of a Merit level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very Good analysis and explanations Very Good insight and personal reflection Carefully structured presentation
MERIT	High 68% Mid 65%	In addition to the qualities of a Pass level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good insight and personal reflection Well organized and structured presentation Good critical thinking and conclusions
	Low 60%	In addition to the qualities of a Pass level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good analysis, arguments and explanations Reasonably well structured and organized Demonstrates good research skills
PASS	High 58% Mid 55%	In addition to the qualities of a Pass level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair analysis, critical thinking and explanation Reasonable insight and personal reflections Well organized presentation Demonstrates reasonable research skills
	Low 50%	Pass level threshold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accessible, accurate and direct account Fair analysis, argument and explanation with some remaining gaps/confusion Fair degree of personal insight and demonstration of reflection Reasonably well presented with reasonable referencing and bibliography
FAIL	49- 45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address the CAR brief adequately CAR is not to a professional standard Weaknesses in the analysis, critical thinking, reflections and explanations Weakly organised presentation Incident Studies weak and poorly articulated Lacks appropriate referencing Errors in grammar / syntax / spelling Prose style obscures the meaning
	44- 0%	In addition to the above comments in the 45-49 range the work demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited Range of evidence or lack of focus Lack of coherent argument and structure Lack of understanding of the material presented Incident studies are not addressed Absence of personal insight Serious weaknesses in organisation of document