

**Policy on the New Zealand Dental Registration
Examinations: Applicants with Assessment of Eligibility
applications submitted PRIOR to 4 November 2009**

Approved by Council: 2 August 2010
Governance Structure Update: 8 August 2011
Updated: 5 December 2011
Policy End Date: end of business 2 August 2012

Introduction

The Dental Council has approved the following policy for the following New Zealand Dental Registration Examinations:

- New Zealand Dentist Registration Examination (NZDREX)
- New Zealand Dental Technology Registration Examinations (NZDTechREX)
- New Zealand Dental Hygiene Registration Examination (NZDHREX)
- New Zealand Dental Therapy Registration Examinations (NZDTREX)

The examination process comprises of two components:

- Written examination
- Clinical examination

Legislation

Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003:

- Section 12 – Qualifications must be prescribed.

Policy Statement

Eligibility criteria for the written examination

1. To be eligible to gain entry to the written examination applicants must satisfy each of the following minimum criteria:
 - a) Provide satisfactory evidence of successful completion of an appropriate dental qualification at a recognised tertiary academic institution:

Examination	Dental qualifications
New Zealand Dentist Registration Examination (NZDREX)	Five-year undergraduate dental degree from a recognised tertiary academic institution
New Zealand Dental Technology Registration Examinations (NZDTechREX)	Three-year dental technology qualification from a recognised tertiary academic institution. Applicants who have completed a two-year qualification with appropriate subsequent experience may be admitted to the examination.
New Zealand Dental Hygiene Registration Examination (NZDHREX)	Two-year dental hygiene qualification from a recognised tertiary academic institution or successful completion of an undergraduate dental degree at a recognised tertiary academic institution.
New Zealand Dental Therapy Registration Examinations (NZDTREX)	Two-year dental therapy qualification from a recognised tertiary academic institution or an undergraduate dental degree from a recognised tertiary academic institution.

- b) Appear to satisfy the fitness for registration requirements of s16 of the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act 2003 (the Act)¹. This section states that no applicant may be registered if:
- i) he or she does not satisfy Council that he or she is able to communicate effectively; or
 - ii) he or she does not satisfy Council that he or she is able to communicate and comprehend English sufficiently to protect the health and safety of the public; or
 - iii) he or she has been convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of three months or longer which reflects adversely on his or her fitness to practise; or
 - iv) he or she is unable to perform the functions required for the practise of dentistry because of a mental or physical condition; or
 - v) he or she is the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings and those proceedings reflect adversely on his or her fitness to practise; or
 - vi) he or she is under investigation in respect of a matter that may be the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings and that investigation reflects adversely on his or her fitness to practise; or
 - vii) he or she is subject to an order which reflects adversely on his or her fitness to practise; or
 - viii) Council has reason to believe that the applicant may endanger the health and safety of the public.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to communicate and comprehend English to a level sufficient to protect the health and safety of the public.
- i) Meet the requirement as stipulated in the Policy on English Competence and English Tests (Appendix A), effective May 2009 – April 2010.

¹ Council will not permit applicants to enter the New Zealand Dental Registration Examinations who may not be eligible for registration. If an applicant does not appear to satisfy the fitness for registration requirements of s16 of the Act, he or she will be directed to submit an application for registration to the Dental Council.

- d) Applications for the assessment of eligibility for enrolment in the written examination are valid for two years after being received by the Dental Council.
 - i) If an applicant has not sat the written examination within a two year period they will be required to submit a new application for assessment.
 - ii) Applicants will then be required to follow the Policy on the Entry Requirements to the New Zealand Dental Registration Examinations for applicants with assessment of eligibility applications submitted **after** 4 November 2009.

Eligibility criteria for the clinical examination

- 2. To be eligible to gain entry to the clinical examination applicants must satisfy each of the following criteria:
 - a) Hold a current pass in the written examination (valid for three years).
 - b) Meet the requirement of the Policy on English Competence and English tests, May 2009 (Appendix A).
 - c) Provide a valid Hepatitis B and C report (requirements for a valid report can be found on the website).
 - d) Applicants have three years from passing the written examination and three opportunities to pass the clinical examination.
 - i) The three year time period cannot be expired at the date of sitting the clinical examination.
 - ii) A request for a fourth and final attempt or a time extension for the clinical examination can be made to the Council and entry is subject to its approval. The Council will need to be satisfied that a period of formal training, of a Council approved course, has been completed before granting approval for a fourth attempt.

Clinical examination partial passes or failures

- 3. Applicants who display competence in all simulation components and failed up to a maximum of two of the additional components (OSCE, Visual Interpretation & Patient Clinical procedures – refer to website for more details) may be awarded a partial pass and will be permitted to retake only those specific outstanding components.
- 4. Applicants who have failed or who received partial passes may not retake the examination until at least three months after the date of the release of the examination results.
 - a) The Council has the discretion to reduce this period.

Clinical examination priority

- 5. The clinical examination can accommodate a limited number of applicants. If more applicants apply, the Dental Council gives priority, in the following order, to applicants who:

- i) are new and have been declined a place once, or have failed and subsequently been declined a place twice (other than priority 7)
- ii) have passed the written examination, in the first attempt, ranked on the basis of their marks
- iii) have been exempted from the written examination
- iv) have passed the written examination, but required more than one attempt, ranked on the basis of their marks
- v) have failed the clinical examination and subsequently been declined a place once
- vi) have failed the clinical examination and are making their first application to resit
- vii) are unable to demonstrate recent clinical experience, being a minimum of six months after graduation, within the past three years
- viii) have transferred from the Australian Dental Council preliminary examination process
- ix) have failed and been advised of the desirability of retraining before resitting

Withdrawing

- 6. If an applicant decides to withdraw from any of the components a withdrawal fee will apply. These fees will be published on the Council's website.

Validity of successful examination components

- 7. The components of the examination process is valid for the following periods from the date of successful completion of the examinations/tests:
 - a) English Tests (IELTS or OET as per Appendix A) - two years.
 - b) Written component – three years.
- 8. Applicants need to register with the Council and practise within New Zealand within three years after passing all the components and meeting the eligibility criteria for registration.
 - a) Applicants will be required, at the time of registration, to meet the requirements as stipulated in the then current Recency of Practice Policy to ensure that they meet the required standard of competence to protect the safety of the public.

Previous policies

- 9. Applicants registered under a previous Policy on Entry Requirements to New Zealand Dental Registration Examinations have two years from the approval date on this policy to complete the New Zealand Dental Registration Examination under the previous policy.
 - a) Applicants who do not complete their examination within the two year period will be required to enrol and comply with the requirements of the current Policy on the New Zealand Dental Registration Examinations.

Future policy changes

- 10. In the event that there any other policy changes associated with examinations, the Dental Council will inform all New Zealand Dental Registration Examination applicants of the policy changes that would potentially impact on them and/or any implementation grace period(s) in the revised policy that will be applied to registered applicants.

Appendix

Appendix A: Policy on English Competence and English Tests: May 2009 – April 2010

Appendix A

Policy on English Competence and English Tests

Approved by Dental Council 26 May 2009

Replaced by revised policy: April 2010

This policy is ONLY valid for Dentist with assessment of eligibility applications submitted PRIOR to 4 November 2009.

Introduction

The Dental Council is charged with the responsibility under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act 2003 to protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing for mechanisms to ensure that oral health practitioners are competent and fit to practice their professions. This includes the ability to communicate effectively.

The Dental Council has approved the following policy on English competence and approved English test which applies to all applicants for registration, including New Zealand graduates.

Legislation

Sections 16 of the HPCA Act 2003 states that no applicant for registration may be registered if:

- a) He or she does not satisfy the Council that he or she is able to communicate effectively; or
- b) He or she does not satisfy the Council that his or her ability to communicate in and comprehend English is sufficient to protect the health and safety of the public

Rationale

Council considers that effective English and communication skills are a pre-requisite to practising as an oral health practitioner in New Zealand. Without them the informed consent and active participation of the patient is jeopardised. An objective test of English communication skills is the best way of ensuring that oral health practitioners can comprehend and communicate effectively.

Policy

Applicants for registration are normally considered to have met the section 16 requirement if:-

- a) The applicant has graduated from a joint Dental Council/ADC accredited programme²; or
- b) English is the applicant's first language; and the applicant has completed their undergraduate dental training in New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, USA, Eire or Canada where English is the sole language of instruction and assessment; or
- c) The applicant has passed a Council approved English test to the required level.

² Provided this is an accredited requirement of the degree programme. (ie the protocol document should require the accreditation team to be assured that graduates possess communication skills equivalent to a B pass in all four parts of OET)

Approved English Test

The Council recognises a pass in the following English tests:

International English Language Testing, IELTS.

Applicants are required to

- a) sit the academic band
- b) gain an average score of 7.5 or more
- c) score at least 7 in each band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking

Or

Occupational English Test (OET)

A pass with A or B grades in each of the four sections is required.

Dental Technology applicants only

International English Language Testing, IELTS.

Applicants are required to

- a) sit the academic band
- b) gain an average score of 7.0 or more

Occupational English Test (OET)

A pass with A or B grades in each of the four sections is required.

Validity

A pass in an approved English test is valid for 2 years for new applicants or 3 years for those repeat registration or examination applicants who can demonstrate, if required, that they have continuously lived and worked in a country where English is the first language.

The Council requires applicants to arrange for English test results to be sent directly to the Dental Council from the examining body.

Deficiencies in English Communication Skills

English communication skills are also assessed as part of the New Zealand dental registration examination process. If deficiencies are found by examiners applicants may fail the clinical examination.

If deficiencies in English communication skills are reported subsequent to registration practitioners may be required to undertake remedial English training and then pass the communication skills assessment of the dental registration examination and/or an approved English test.

The Council has discretionary power to require an applicant to provide proof of English language competence at any time.

Implementation of Policy

This policy will take effect from 5 December 2008. From 5 December 2008 exemptions are no longer granted