

Executive summary of submissions

Key themes from phase one consultation

A discussion document on recertifying our oral health practitioners:
thinking about the future

(February 2018)



Dental Council
Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho

Executive summary

Introduction

This report provides an executive summary of the key themes drawn from practitioner and stakeholder submissions on our review of recertification. A full copy of the Summary Report of submissions can be found [here](#).

Background

Between June and September 2017, we consulted with the sector about recertification. In addition to issuing a [discussion document](#), we invited practitioners and stakeholders to complete an online submission. We also held 10 face-to-face forums and two webinars to encourage people to share their views and experiences about recertification with us.

At the end of the three-month consultation period a total of 246 people and/or organisations had completed online submissions. We also received 10 free-form written submissions and had discussions with approximately 500 practitioners and stakeholders through our forums and webinars.

Information about respondents who made a submission on recertification

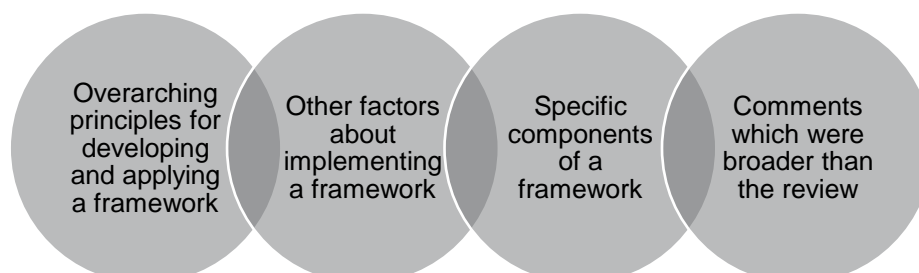
In addition to identifying the key themes for this summary report, we also analysed the demographic information provided on questions 1 to 3 of the survey. Our analysis highlighted the following points about respondents who made a submission:

- the vast majority of submissions were made by registered oral health practitioners (93.44%)
- based on the percentage of currently registered practitioners by profession, dental hygienists and therapists made fewer submissions than other professional groups
- members of the public, district health boards and educational providers made the fewest submissions compared with other stakeholder groups.

Key findings from the first phase of consultation

Focusing on the four main themes of the summary report

Respondents shared a range of perspectives and experiences about recertification with us during the first phase of consultation. For the purposes of this executive summary, these ideas and comments were arranged into themes and sub-themes.¹ The four main themes of the summary report are:



¹ The themes and sub-themes were extracted primarily from the survey and free-form written submissions. Information was also obtained from staff notes and comments from people who completed participant feedback forms for the forums and webinars.

We received a lot of comments about potential changes or improvements to our current approach to recertification. Many of these were about how respondents wanted us to develop and apply a recertification framework to all practitioners. Through our analysis we identified some overarching principles to address these suggestions.

Respondents also had concerns about the impact any changes to recertification might have on practitioners. Respondents:

- asked that any decisions be clearly communicated to practitioners and stakeholders well in advance of changes being implemented
- advocated for any changes to be implemented incrementally to minimise impacts on practitioners.

Respondents also commented widely on some of the key aspects of our recertification framework. The majority of these comments related to two components—ongoing education and learning opportunities (i.e. continuing professional development (CPD)) and audits and reviews. Respondents also had a lot to say about better access to mentoring and support for practitioners (especially for overseas-trained new registrants) and practitioner competency.

Some of the comments and suggestions we received, while relevant to recertification, also have broader application than this review. These were about:

- how we could strengthen and improve the quality of our engagement and relationships with practitioners and stakeholders
- processes respondents were using (in their work environments) they felt could be incorporated into other aspects of our approach to regulating the sector.

Key messages from the analysis of comments

Our analysis of the submissions confirmed our respondents have wide-ranging perspectives and expectations about recertification. Our analysis also confirmed there was neither universal nor definitive agreement about what constitutes a good recertification framework for practitioners.

When analysing submissions we found:

- some of the themes and sub-themes in the summary report were easily identified because respondents' comments were influenced by a specific survey question or cluster of survey questions
- other themes and sub-themes emerged because they were frequently mentioned, discussed or addressed within individual submissions.
- even where there was a clear quantitative outcome to a survey question, the qualitative comments associated with that question sometimes softened or contradicted the result of the question being considered.

In addition, the following key messages can be taken from the analysis of submissions:

- respondents felt that change was required because our current one-size-fits-all approach to recertification did not work well or meet the needs of all practitioners
- factors such as scope of practice, profession and practice environment could influence whether it would be easy or difficult for a practitioner to comply with recertification requirements

- CPD may not of itself be an adequate determinant of competence—however, constructive engagement in a wide range of ongoing education and learning activities could assist the maintenance of a practitioner’s competence.

Using the submissions in the next phase of development

While most respondents were not vehemently opposed to the opportunities for change we identified, not all were entirely swayed by the case put forward in the discussion document. We have especially noted respondents’ comments and suggestions that we provide more information and/or data on some of the issues (e.g. the use of tools and mechanisms to identify and manage risks for practitioners).

There is a balancing act that must be achieved in giving consideration to all of the comments provided by respondents. In some cases this will be more challenging, especially where there was no clear preference or where differing or opposing views were expressed about the same topic or issue.

In order to determine the best way forward for everyone, we must consider the feedback we received through this first phase of consultation alongside the:

- findings from the literature review we completed to inform this review
- advice and information we have, and continue to gather, from discussions with other responsible authorities and regulators (in New Zealand and overseas) about recertification
- data currently available to us through reviewing cases presented to Council.

We want a recertification framework which is effective (i.e. it protects the health and safety of the public), fair to all practitioners and robust and evidence-based.

It is clear from the comments we received that respondents want these same things too.