

8 September 2022

Kia ora koutou,

## Consultation on proposed addition of Haumarutanga ahurea/Cultural safety domain to dental specialist competencies for New Zealand

The current dental specialist competencies were jointly developed by the Dental Council ('the Council') and the Dental Board of Australia ('DBA'), and came into effect in 2016.

In 2021, the Council reviewed and updated the competencies for the other oral health professions (excluding dental specialists). The biggest change was the inclusion of a new domain, *Haumarutanga ahurea/Cultural safety*, coming into effect on 1 January 2023. The Council acknowledges the valuable input from Te Aō Marama – New Zealand Māori Dental Association and the Māori Oral Health Quality Improvement Group in the development of this new domain.

The Haumarutanga ahurea/Cultural safety domain recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and reflects the shift from oral health practitioners being 'culturally competent' to 'culturally safe' – as determined by the patient, their whānau, hapū or iwi.

Cultural safety extends beyond a practitioner's cultural competence.

It requires the practitioner to examine themselves and the potential impact of their own culture on clinical interactions and the care they provide.

Key to providing culturally safe care is that the practitioner understands the inherent power imbalance in the practitioner-patient relationship, recognises and respects each patient as an individual, and enables meaningful two-way communication to occur.

Cultural safety requires that all people receive oral health care that takes into account their uniqueness.

It is the person and/or their community, whānau or hapū receiving the care who determine what culturally safe care means for them.

With the joint review of the specialist competencies being delayed until next year, the Council is proposing that the Haumarutanga ahurea/Cultural safety domain and competencies, as they appear in the current competencies for all other oral health professions, be included in all the dental specialist competencies, effective 1 January 2024. The transition for implementation will allow dental specialists, not already doing so, to undertake professional development in this area, and allow the educational providers to ensure the competencies are embedded into the curriculum.

This reflects the Council's view that the cultural safety competencies apply equally for all oral health practitioners practising in Aotearoa New Zealand, and relate specifically to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. These competencies already apply to those dental specialists also registered in the general dental practice scope of practice.

Further, the Council recognises its role to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi within the health sector to improve Māori health outcomes, as demonstrated in the Ministry of Health's [Whakamaua: Māori Health Action Plan 2020-2025](#).

The Council is proposing to gazette the updated dental specialist competencies which means they will have the same legal standing as the scopes of practice, consistent with the legal standing of the competencies of the other oral health professions.

The comprehensive review of the dental specialist competencies will still take place jointly with the DBA, in 2023.

The Council is now inviting feedback on the proposals detailed above.

The proposed updated competencies for each dental specialist scope of practice are provided as [attachments 1- 12](#). Proposed updates are in red.

### Have your say

The consultation process provides dentists and dental specialists, Māori patients and their whānau, and other interested parties (including professional associations and societies, the Ministry of Health and educational institutions) with an opportunity to make submissions.

We welcome and value all feedback, but multiple, identical submissions do not carry any more weight than a single submission. All feedback we receive will be considered and will inform our final decision.

Please ensure you include answers to the consultation questions outlined on page 3 when you respond.

### Submissions

Your submissions must reach us by **6 October 2022**.

You can submit your responses to [consultations@dcnz.org.nz](mailto:consultations@dcnz.org.nz).

Submissions received will be published on our website and will record the submitter's name and profession (for registered oral health practitioners). All other contact details will be removed. We will not publish any submissions containing derogatory or inflammatory content.

As this is a public consultation process, "In confidence" information will only be accepted under special circumstances. Please contact us before submitting material in confidence.

If you have any questions about this consultation, you can contact us by [email](#) or phone 04 499 4820. I look forward to receiving your views on the proposals.

Ngā mihi



Marie MacKay  
Chief Executive

## List of attachments

The following draft sets of competencies are presented for consultation:

1. [Dental specialist competencies: Endodontics](#)
2. [Dental specialist competencies: Oral and maxillofacial surgery](#)
3. [Dental specialist competencies: Oral medicine](#)
4. [Dental specialist competencies: Oral pathology](#)
5. [Dental Specialist competencies: Oral surgery](#)
6. [Dental specialist competencies: Orthodontics](#)
7. [Dental specialist competencies: Paediatric dentistry](#)
8. [Dental specialist competencies: Periodontics](#)
9. [Dental specialist competencies: Prosthodontics](#)
10. [Dental specialist competencies: Restorative dentistry](#) (New Zealand only)
11. [Dental specialist competencies: Special needs dentistry](#)
12. [Dental specialist competencies: Public health dentistry](#) (Community Dentistry)

## Consultation questions

Please provide your feedback by responding to the following questions:

1. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to include and gazette the *Haumarutanga ahurea/Cultural safety* domain and competencies - as they appear in the current competencies for all other oral health professions - in the dental specialist competencies, effective 1 January 2024.

Please detail your position.

2. Do you have any further feedback or concerns with the proposals?