

English language requirements and tests policy

Date last reviewed	May 2009
Scheduled review	
Approved by	Council

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure oral health practitioners can comprehend and communicate effectively, by setting out English language requirements for practising in New Zealand.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants for registration, including New Zealand graduates.

Policy

1. Applicants must satisfy the Dental Council they are able to communicate effectively, and that their ability to communicate in and comprehend English language is sufficient to protect the health and safety of the public.

Poor English language or other communication skills can jeopardise patient health and safety. For example, without these skills the informed consent and active participation of the patient in their care may be compromised.

2. Applications for registration are normally considered to have met the English language requirement if:
 - (a) The applicant has graduated from:
 - i) A Dental Council accredited programme; or
 - ii) A Dental Board of Australia approved programme; or
 - (b) English is the applicant's first language; and the applicant has completed their undergraduate dental training in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Eire or Canada where English is the sole language of instruction and assessment; or
 - (c) The applicant has passed a Dental Council approved English language test to the required level.

3. An applicant may be required to provide proof of English language competence at any time.

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

4. Deficiencies in English language communication skills reported after registration may require remedial training and skills assessment.

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

- Where an applicant sits an English language test, their pass will be valid for two or three years.

A pass in a Dental Council approved English language test is valid for two years for new applications or three years for those repeat registration examination candidates who can demonstrate, if required, that they have continuously lived and worked in a country where English is the first language.

Dental Council approved English language tests and required pass rates

Results from the following language examinations must be obtained in one sitting.

- International English Language Testing (IELTS):

	Level of proficiency
Dentists and Dental Specialists	<p>Applicants are required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> sit the academic band; and gain an average score of 7.5 or more; and score at least 7 in each band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking.
Dental Hygienists	<p>Applicants are required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> sit the academic band; and gain an average score of 7.5 or more; and score at least 7 in each band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking.
Dental Therapists	<p>Applicants are required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> sit the academic band; and gain an average score of 7.5 or more; and score at least 7 in each band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking.
Oral Health Therapists	<p>Applicants are required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> sit the academic band; and gain an average score of 7.5 or more; and score at least 7 in each band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Orthodontic Auxiliaries	Applicants are required to: a) sit the academic band; and b) score at least 7 in each band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking.
Dental Technicians	Applicants are required to: a) sit the academic band; and b) gain an average score of 7 or more across the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking.
Clinical Dental Technicians	Applicants are required to: a) sit the academic band; and b) gain an average score of 7.5 or more; and c) score at least 7 in each band of the four individual components of listening, reading, writing and speaking.

2. Occupational English Test (OET):

	Level of proficiency
Dentists and Dental Specialists	A pass with A or B grades in each of the four components.
Dental Hygienists	A pass with A or B grades in each of the four components.
Dental Therapists	A pass with A or B grades in each of the four components.
Oral Health Therapists	A pass with A or B grades in each of the four components.
Orthodontic Auxiliaries	A pass with A or B grades in each of the four components.
Dental Technicians	A pass with A or B grades in each of the four components.
Clinical Dental Technicians	A pass with A or B grades in each of the four components.

Responsibilities

Applicants	Meeting the costs of the English language test(s). Arranging for test results to be provided directly to the Dental Council by the examining body.
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