

Registration examinations

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Scope

1. This policy applies to applicants who apply to sit a registration examination offered on behalf of Dental Council | Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho (the Council) and to oral health practitioners who are required by the Council to sit a registration examination for regulatory purposes.
2. The following examinations are captured by this policy:
 - New Zealand Dental Specialist Registration Examinations (NZDSREX)
 - New Zealand Oral Health Therapy Registration Examination (NZOHTREX)
 - New Zealand Dental Hygiene Registration Examination (NZDHREX)
 - New Zealand Dental Therapy Registration Examination (NZDTREX)
 - New Zealand Dental Technology Registration Examination (NZDTechREX)
 - New Zealand Clinical Dental Technology Registration Examination (NZCDTechREX).

("registration examinations")

Dentist registration examination

3. The New Zealand Dentist Registration Examination (NZDREX) is administered by the National Dental Examining Board of Canada (NDEB).¹ Applicants for the NZDREX need to contact the NDEB for information about eligibility to enter this examination. This policy does not apply to NZDREX.

Purpose

4. The purpose of this policy is to protect public safety by supporting the Council to apply a proportionate, consistent, fair, and transparent approach to managing its registration examinations.
5. In exercising its examinations functions, the Council will comply with its obligations under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (“the Act”).

Background

6. The Council has gazetted specified examinations as prescribed qualifications for registration in the professions of dentistry (including specialties), oral health therapy, dental hygiene, dental therapy, clinical dental technology and dental technology.²
7. These examinations assess an applicant’s knowledge, skills, and competence to ensure they meet the required standard of competence to practise safely in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Policy

8. All the registration examinations this policy applies to are administered on behalf of the Council by educational institutions delivering Council accredited programmes.
9. The form, rules, and requirements of the registration examinations vary from profession to profession. General information is available on the Council’s website. The relevant examination administrator will provide applicants with all necessary information, together with any study resources, in advance of the examination.

Admission and eligibility

10. Applicants must apply to the Council to sit a registration examination.

¹ NZDREX comprises an assessment of fundamental knowledge (AFK), an assessment of clinical judgement (ACJ) and assessment of clinical skills (NDECC). It is a prescribed qualification for registration in the scope of practice for general dental practice.

² Applicants for registration must also meet all registration requirements in s 15 and s 16 of the Act, and Council policy.

11. Before applying to sit a registration examination, applicants are encouraged to use the Council's online registration pathway self-assessment tool to assess whether there is a more suitable registration pathway available.
12. To be eligible to sit a registration examination, all applicants must hold (and provide satisfactory evidence of) an appropriate qualification for the profession in which they are seeking registration. The entry qualification requirements are set out below.

Examination	Dental qualifications
New Zealand Dental Hygiene Registration Examination (NZDHREX)	A dental hygiene qualification.
New Zealand Dental Therapy Registration Examination (NZDTREX)	A dental therapy qualification.
New Zealand Oral Health Therapy Registration Examination (NZOHTREX)	An oral health qualification (covering both restorative and preventative care) or a combined dental therapy/dental hygiene qualification.
New Zealand Dental Technology Registration Examination (NZDTechREX)	A clinical dental technology or dental technology qualification.
New Zealand Clinical Dental Technology Registration Examination (NZCDTechREX)	A clinical dental technology qualification.
New Zealand Dental Specialist Registration Examination (NZDSREX)	A minimum two year full-time equivalent postgraduate specialist qualification and evidence of research activity.

13. In addition to holding an appropriate entry qualification, the applicant must demonstrate that they would meet fitness for registration requirements at the point they apply to sit a registration examination;³ this reduces the risk of an applicant being admitted to an examination, when they would not meet other registration requirements (e.g., English language, criminal convictions, fitness to practise (health)).
14. Once eligibility to sit an examination is confirmed, the Council will process the application and advise the relevant educational institution that the applicant has been accepted to sit the registration examination.
15. Each applicant who is eligible to sit an examination has a maximum of three years from the date of their first attempt, and a maximum of three attempts in total.⁴ Applicants will not be permitted to sit an examination if they have exceeded the maximum number of attempts or the permitted timeframe.
16. If there are separate written and clinical examinations, applicants will not be eligible to sit the clinical component until they have successfully passed the written component.
17. The Council has complete discretion not to permit an applicant from making any further attempt(s) at a registration examination, where the maximum number of

³ See Registration Policy

⁴ If an application is in two separate parts, the total number of attempts permitted is three across both parts.

attempt(s) are not exhausted, if the Council considers the applicant's previous result(s) are substantially below the required pass rate for the examination.

Results

18. Applicants will be notified by the Council of their results in writing as soon practicable after completing an examination. No results will be given by phone.

Examination pass

19. An applicant will only be determined to have passed a registration examination when they have passed all components of the registration examination for the scope of practice applied for. Every examination (and every component of an examination) must be passed in its entirety in a single sitting; partial retakes are not permitted.
20. When the applicant has passed the registration examination, they can apply to the Council for registration in the relevant scope of practice. An application for registration is a separate process, and the applicant must complete the relevant form(s), provide additional information, and pay the relevant fee.

Examination issues

21. If an applicant believes they performed poorly because of illness or other exceptional circumstances they may apply to the Council for a 'special allowance.' The applicant must advise the Council about the exceptional circumstances as soon as possible, and no later than 7 days, after the examination. Written evidence to support their claim, including a recent medical certificate (if relevant), should be provided to the Council.
22. If the Council accepts that an applicant's performance was affected by illness or other exceptional circumstance, the Council will make a special allowance not to count the applicant's failed examination attempt towards the total number of attempts they are permitted to pass the examination. Each applicant is limited to one special allowance across all attempts.
23. If the Council grants a special allowance, the applicant:
 - Is not eligible for any refund for the attempt for which the special allowance was given; and
 - Must still pay the relevant examination fee for any further attempt(s).
24. The Council cannot overturn an examination result.

Withdrawal prior to the examination

25. If a withdrawal is received 40 days or more before the examination date, a partial refund of fees may be granted on a case-by-case basis in limited circumstances, including verified medical conditions. Partial refunds are not generally available if the applicant withdraws within 40 days of the examination.

Administration

Related policies

1. Registration Policy

Version control

Approved by Council:	
Policies replaced or revoked by this policy	
REG001	New Zealand Dental Registration Examinations (September 2021)