Notice Under the Legislation Act 2019 of Prescribed Qualifications for Scope of Practice for Special Needs Dentistry Specialists

Under the Legislation Act 2019, notice is given of the making of the following secondary legislation:

Title	*Empowering provision(s)*	*Administering agency*
Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003	Section 12	Dental Council

This notice revokes and replaces the prescribed qualifications for the Scope of Practice for Special Needs Dentistry Specialists as published in the *New Zealand Gazette*, 16 April 2026, Notice No. 2026-sl1823. The scope of practice and competencies for special needs dentistry specialists published in the *New Zealand Gazette*, 19 January 2023, Notice No. 2023-sl86 remain unchanged.

This notice has the status of secondary legislation for the purpose of the Legislation Act 2019 and can be accessed at: https://dcnz.org.nz/about-the-dental-council/who-we-are/publications?type=Gazette+notice#e738.

This notice comes into force on 10 December 2026.

Prescribed Qualifications for the Scope of Practice for Special Needs Dentistry Specialists

New Zealand Accredited Programmes

- MDS (Special Needs) University of Otago[1].
- DClinDent (Special Needs) University of Otago[2].
- Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons in Special Needs Dentistry[3].

Competent Authority- Qualification

Australia

- An ADC accredited MDS or MDSc programme in special needs dentistry[4].
- An Australian educational institution specialist qualification approved by the Dental Board of Australia for the purposes of specialist registration in special needs dentistry in Australia[5].

Examination

- Two years or more of full-time equivalent postgraduate special needs dentistry specialist qualification, evidence of research activity and a pass in the New Zealand Dental Specialist Registration Examination.

Competent Authority – Registration[6]

- Current full/unrestricted/unconditional registration appropriate for practice as a special needs dentistry specialist with a competent authority(s) recognised by the Dental Council[7]; and
- Clinical practice[8] in specialist special needs dentistry in the recognised competent authority(s) for at least 24 months (working 20 hours or more per week) in the past five years, including 12 months within the last 18 months immediately prior to application.

Dated this 2nd day of November 2026.

MARIE MACKAY, Chief Executive, Dental Council.

Endnotes

1. Accreditation expired.

2. Accreditation ended 31 December 2023.

3. RACDS special needs dentistry training programme accredited from 3 March 2026. Commencement of this programme is dependent on the establishment of special needs dentistry registrar role/s and the agreement for RACDS to undertake the training in accordance with the accredited programme.

4. Before 30 June 2010, and before 17 October 2010 for Western Australia.

5. From 1 July 2010 onwards, and 18 October 2010 onwards for Western Australia.

6. The Competent Authority – Registration pathway came into effect on 1 November 2026. Upon commencement of practice in New Zealand, practitioners registered under the competent authority

registration pathway will practise under the oversight of a Dental Council approved practitioner for a period of at least six months under the terms of the oversight protocol.

7. United Kingdom (General Dental Council), Australia (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) for the purposes of special needs dentistry.

8. Clinical practice means the maintenance of health through the assessment, diagnosis, management, treatment, and prevention of any disease, disorder or condition of the orofacial complex and associated structures.

2026-sl6514 10-11-2026 09:01