

Information guide to

New registration pathways

From 1st November 2026, the Dental Council | Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho is introducing three new registration pathways.

The new pathways recognise practice experience in competent authorities and comparable health systems jurisdictions, and allow for practice in a New Zealand tertiary education institution to do teaching and research.

The new pathways provide a quicker and less costly pathway to registration compared with the individual assessment and examination options.

Like the existing pathways, the conditions and requirements are risk-based. As the public health and safety risk increases, so do the safeguards we put in place.

The Council is in the process of developing supporting guidance for the new pathways ready for the release of online applications forms on 1 November 2026. **No applications will be accepted before then.**

In the interim, this quick guide provides an overview of the three new pathways to help overseas practitioners make informed decisions about which pathway may be best suited to their qualifications, training and experience.

Competent authority – registration pathway

For practitioners who qualified outside of a recognised competent authority jurisdiction¹, but hold full, unconditional registration with a competent authority(s), and meet the practice experience requirement for their scope of practice.

Comparable health system pathway

For dentists who hold full, unconditional registration with a recognised comparable health system(s), and meet the clinical practice experience requirement for general dentistry.

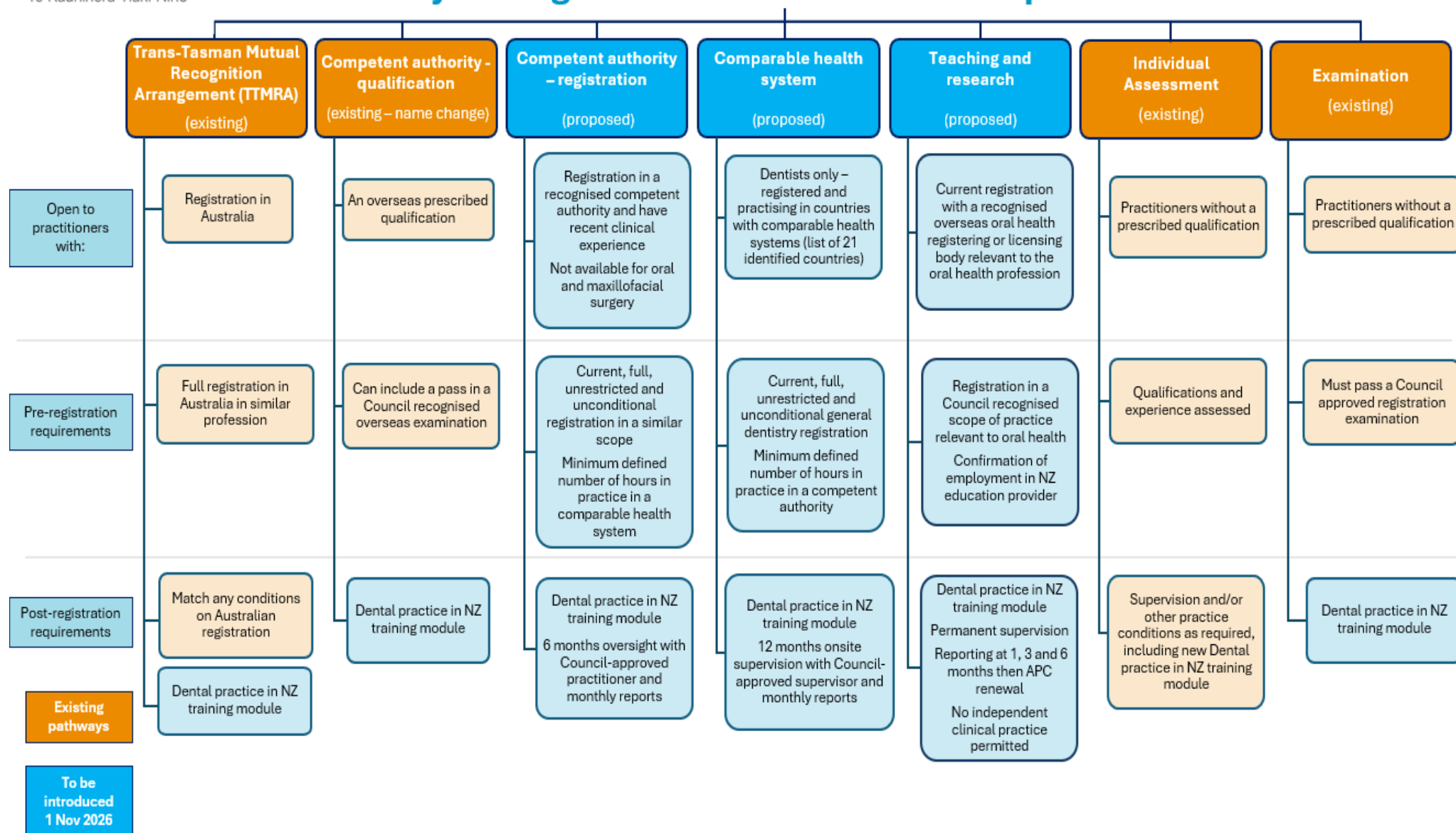
Teaching and research scope of practice

Allows a pathway to limited registration for overseas practitioners who are not eligible for the competent authority or comparable health system pathways, but have a job offer from a New Zealand tertiary education institution to provide clinical learning, teaching, and research education for accredited New Zealand oral health programmes. Individual practice, i.e. management of own patients is not permitted.

The new pathways are set out below alongside the existing pathways, and the eligibility requirements are tabled on page 3.

¹ Australia, United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Ireland

Pathways to registration - overseas trained practitioners



Eligibility and pre-registration requirements, and conditions for practising in New Zealand for the three new pathways

	Competent authority – registration	Comparable health system	Teaching and research
Applies to	All scopes of practice except oral and maxillofacial surgery and oral medicine dental specialists	General dental practice	Within any scope of practice
Jurisdictions/Countries	Current recognised competent authorities are¹: - Australian health practitioner regulation agency and Dental Board of Australia - Dental Council of Ireland - General Dental Council (United Kingdom) - Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada and Canadian provincial dental regulators and the National Dental Examining Board of Canada - Commission on Dental Accreditation and USA state dental boards	- Austria - Belgium - Hong Kong - Czech Republic - Denmark - Finland - France - Germany - Greece - Iceland - Israel - Italy - Japan - Netherlands - Norway - Portugal - Republic of Korea - Singapore - Spain - Sweden - Switzerland²	Applicants must hold current registration with a recognised overseas oral health registering or licensing body in a Dental Council recognised scope of practice, that allows the practitioner to conduct oral health clinical learning, teaching and/or research relevant to the oral health profession
Registration requirements	<i>Dentists</i> - Applicants must hold current, full, unrestricted, and unconditional general	- The dentist must hold current, full, unrestricted, and unconditional general dentistry registration with a recognised comparable health system authority(s)	Confirmation of employment by a New Zealand education institution to provide clinical learning, teaching and/or research education for New Zealand accredited oral health programmes

¹ Authorities with an equivalent regulatory system, including systems for accreditation, setting professional standards, competence assessment and registration, ensuring ongoing competence and fitness to practise.

² Countries with comparable health system infrastructure, population health outcomes, and health regulatory frameworks.

	dentistry registration in a recognised competent authority(s) - They must have practised clinically in general dental practice in a competent authority(s) for at least 33 months (working 20 hours or more per week) during the 48 months before applying <i>Recognised dental specialists</i> - Applicants must hold current, full, unrestricted, and unconditional registration appropriate for practice in the specialty applied for, in a recognised competent authority(s) - They must have practised clinically in their specialty scope of practice in a 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 before applying <i>Oral health therapists, dental hygienists, dental therapists, clinical dental and dental technicians, and orthodontic auxiliaries</i> - Applicants must hold current, full, unrestricted, and unconditional registration in the equivalent scope of practice with a recognised competent authority(s) - They must have practised clinically³ in their identified oral health profession in a	- They must have practised clinically in general dental practice in a comparable health system(s)⁴ for at least 33 months (work 20 hours or more per week) during the 48 months before applying	
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³ For dental technology, practised clinically means undertaking technical work for clinical cases.

⁴ Competent authority practice experience can count toward this time requirement, if not sufficient for the Competent Authority – Registration pathway.

	competent authority(s) for at least 33 months (working 20 hours or more per week) during the 48 months before applying		
Conditions for practising in New Zealand	Registration includes a period of oversight as part of a broader oversight programme. This includes: - Completion of a Dental practice in New Zealand module aimed at orientating practitioners to the New Zealand healthcare system, regulatory and practising environment - Six months of practice under the oversight of a Council-approved practitioner - Monthly oversight reports and a letter of recommendation at the end of the oversight period. The registration conditions will be removed after application by the practitioner with evidence that demonstrates successful completion of all the programme requirements.	Registration includes a period of supervision as part of a broader supervision programme. This includes: - Completion of a Dental practice in New Zealand module aimed at orientating practitioners to the New Zealand healthcare system, regulatory and practising environment - 12 months of practice under direct (onsite) supervision of a Council-approved supervisor - Monthly supervisor reports and a letter of recommendation at the end of the supervision period. The registration conditions will be removed after application by the practitioner with evidence that demonstrates successful completion of all the programme requirements.	Registration will be subject to permanent supervision, specifically: - Individual clinical practice i.e. management of patients is not permitted in any location, and the pathway does not lead to general or specialist registration - Supervision by a Council-approved supervisor who is employed by the same teaching institution as the registrant - Supervisor reports are required initially at 1, 3, and 6 months and thereafter with the annual practising certificate renewal, based on the Council's competencies relevant to the registration category - Completion of a Dental practice in New Zealand module aimed at orientating practitioners to the New Zealand healthcare system, regulatory and practising environment will be required within the first six months of supervised practice. To be eligible to practise independently, the practitioner must apply for registration in their relevant scope of practice following the other available registration pathways.