



Position Statement: Overseas Qualified Practitioners

The purpose of this position statement is to identify and outline the pathways to recognition of overseas acquired dental and oral health therapy qualifications and to provide assistance for this purpose.

The ADOHTA supports the process to allow dental and oral health therapists who have gained their qualifications outside of Australia, to achieve practice registration in Australia. An Australian-based assessment process is underutilized, thereby denying skilled professionals the ability to practice in Australia to address community unmet dental needs. Dental and oral health therapists registered in New Zealand are able to apply for registration in Australia under Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition. A procedure for mutual recognition should be offered to dental therapists, dental hygienists and oral health therapists who hold qualifications and practice registration in other countries.

The process of assessment for dental and oral health therapists who have received their qualification in any other country should be either- via direct entry with current registration and graduated from an accredited program at least to the expected standard in Australia in selected countries, or by an entry exam, both written practical assessments. The current assessment process is undertaken by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) and overseen by the Dental Board of Australia (DBA).

The ADOHTA asserts that dental and oral health therapists educated in the Canada, United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland should be eligible to apply for registration within Australia under mutual recognition similar to that offered to dentists educated in the Canada, United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Where there is a deficiency in the skill set, consideration should also be given to the development of a bridging course to enable overseas trained dental and oral health therapists to upgrade their skills to enable them to seek full registration as an Oral Health Therapist, Dental Therapist or Dental Hygienist within Australia.

As dental and oral health therapists are registered health practitioners requiring profession specific undergraduate preparation, only those people holding qualifications in dental or oral health therapy are eligible to apply for registration to practice in Australia under health profession title protection.

People holding qualifications as a dentist must apply through the overseas qualified dentists' pathway available through the ADC and cannot apply to register as a dental or oral health therapist. All enquiries from overseas qualified practitioners shall be referred to the ADC and the DBA.

Australian Dental Council: <http://www.adc.org.au/index.php?id=6>

Dental Board of Australia: <http://www.dentalboard.gov.au/Registration/Overseas-Practitioner-Registration.aspx>

New Zealand

An assessment process for overseas qualified practitioners to enable registration as a Dental Therapist, Dental Hygienist or Oral Health Therapist is conducted by the Dental Council of New Zealand. Successful applicants are then able to apply through Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition for registration within Australia.

Overseas Trained Dentists

Currently overseas trained dentists have 3 options to enable them to gain registration within Australia

- 1) Complete an Australian undergraduate or postgraduate dental program, which is accredited by the ADC.
- 2) By Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition for New Zealand trained dentists or by possessing an approved qualification immediately acceptable to the Dental Board of Australia. eg from United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Canada.
- 3) Assessment and recognition of overseas qualifications by ADC. The ADC examination has been developed to assess, (for registration purposes), the dental knowledge and clinical skills of overseas trained dentists whose foundation dental qualifications are not recognised by the Dental Board of Australia.

The Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme (PSDWS) has been a previous pathway option introduced to help alleviate workforce shortages in the public sector, particularly in rural and remote areas. The DBA has confirmed this pathway will be closed with transitional arrangements to ensure existing applicants will not be impacted on.