

**Dental Council**  
**Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003**

**Notice of Scopes of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications**  
**Issued by the Dental Council pursuant to sections 11 and 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003**

***Dental Therapists***

***Scope of Dental Therapy Practice***

The scope of practice for dental therapists is set out in the documented “Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Therapy Practice” produced and published from time to time by the Dental Council.

Dental therapy practice is a subset of the practice of dentistry, and is commensurate with a dental therapist’s approved education, training and competence.

Dental therapists provide oral health assessment, treatment, management and prevention services for children and adolescents up to age 18. Disease prevention and oral health promotion and maintenance are core activities.

Dental therapists and dentists have a consultative working relationship, which is documented in an agreement between the parties.

***Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Therapy Practice***

The Dental Council defines the practice of dentistry as 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.

Dental therapy practice is a subset of the practice of dentistry, and is commensurate with a dental therapist’s approved education, training and competence.

Dental therapists and dentists have a consultative working relationship, which is documented in an agreement between the parties.

In collaboration with dentists and other health care professionals, and in partnership with individuals, whānau and communities, dental therapists provide oral health assessment, treatment, management and prevention services for children and adolescents up to age 18. Disease prevention and oral health promotion and maintenance are core activities.

Dental therapy practice involves:

- obtaining medical histories and consulting with other health practitioners as appropriate
- examination of oral tissues, diagnosis of dental caries and recognition of abnormalities
- preparation of an oral care plan
- informed consent procedures
- administration of local anaesthetic using dentoalveolar infiltration, inferior dental nerve block and topical local anaesthetic techniques
- preparation of cavities and restoration of primary and permanent teeth using direct placement of appropriate dental materials
- extraction of primary teeth
- pulp capping in primary and permanent teeth
- preventive dentistry including cleaning, polishing and scaling (to remove deposits in association with gingivitis), fissure sealants, and fluoride applications
- oral health education and promotion
- taking of impressions for, constructing and fitting mouthguards<sup>1</sup>
- referral as necessary to the appropriate practitioner/agency
- performing pulpotomies on primary teeth.
- taking and interpreting periapical and bitewing radiographs
- preparing teeth for, and placing stainless steel crowns on primary teeth.

Dental therapy practice includes teaching, research and management given that such roles influence clinical practice and public safety.

### ***Prescribed Qualifications***

1. Bachelor of Oral Health, University of Otago; or
2. Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health, Auckland University of Technology; or
3. Certificate in Dental Therapy or Certificate in Dental Nursing (issued by the Department of Health or a New Zealand educational institution) and approved experience in the provision of dental therapy services within the scope of dental therapy practice (including interpreting periapical and bitewing radiographs under the direction and supervision of a dentist who can attest to competency) and evidence of successful completion of Dental Council approved courses for Pulpotomies and Stainless Steel Crowns and Radiography and Diagnostic Radiography (or an exemption certificate for radiography issued by the New Zealand Medical Radiation Technologists Board (MRTB) current as at 18 September 2004); or
4. Diploma in Dental Therapy (issued by a New Zealand educational institution) and approved experience in the provision of dental therapy services within the scope of dental therapy practice (including interpreting periapical and bitewing radiographs under the direction and supervision of a dentist who can attest to competency) and evidence of successful completion of Dental Council approved

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<sup>1</sup> Dental therapists who have not received training in this area as part of their undergraduate programme can undertake this activity only in accordance with the Council's policy on advanced areas of practice.

courses for Pulpotomies and Stainless Steel Crowns and Radiography and Diagnostic Radiography (excluding a Diploma in Dental Therapy issued by University of Otago or an exemption certificate for radiography issued by the New Zealand Medical Radiation Technologists Board (MRTB) current as at 18 September 2004); or

5. Bachelor of Health Science (Endorsement in Dental Therapy), University of Otago; or
6. Undergraduate dental therapy degree or diploma from the Australian Dental Council or Dental Board of Australia accredited educational programme that included education in Pulpotomies, Stainless Steel Crowns, Radiography and Diagnostic Radiography and registration in Australia; or
7. Undergraduate dental therapy degree or diploma, or an undergraduate dental degree; and a pass in the Dental Council Dental Therapy Registration Examination.

## **Scope for Adult Care in Dental Therapy Practice**

The provision of oral health assessment, treatment, management and prevention services; within the general dental therapy scope of practice; for adult patients aged 18 years and older that, depending on the dental therapist's qualifications, is provided in a team situation under direct clinical supervision<sup>2</sup> or the clinical guidance<sup>3</sup> of a practising dentist/s or dental specialist/s. Disease prevention and oral health promotion and maintenance are core activities.

### **Prescribed Qualifications**

*Prescribed qualifications for practising under clinical guidance:*

- Certificate in Dental Therapy (issued by the Department of Health or a New Zealand educational institution); registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy practice and a Dental Council accredited qualification in adult dental therapy practice<sup>4</sup>; or
- Diploma in Dental Therapy (issued by a New Zealand educational institution); registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy practice and a Dental Council accredited qualification in adult dental therapy practice; or
- Bachelor of Health Science (Endorsement in Dental Therapy), University of Otago; registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy practice and a Dental Council accredited qualification in adult dental therapy practice; or
- Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health, Auckland University of Technology; registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy practice and a Dental Council accredited qualification in adult dental therapy practice; or
- Bachelor of Oral Health, University of Otago; registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy Practice and a Dental Council accredited qualification in adult dental therapy practice.

### **For applications received before 19 September 2004**

- Certificate in Dental Therapy (issued by the Department of Health or a New Zealand educational institution); registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy Practice and approved experience in the provision of oral healthcare to adults under the direction and supervision of a dentist, who can attest to competency; or
- Diploma in Dental Therapy (issued by a New Zealand educational institution); registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy Practice and approved experience in the provision of oral healthcare to adults under the direction and supervision of a dentist, who can attest to competency; or
- Bachelor of Health Science (Endorsement in Dental Therapy), University of Otago; registration in the Scope of General Dental Therapy practice and

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<sup>2</sup> **Direct clinical supervision** means the clinical supervision provided to a dental therapist by a practising dentist or dental specialist when the dentist is present on the premises at the time the dental therapy work is carried out.

<sup>3</sup> **Clinical guidance** means the professional support and assistance provided to a dental therapist by a practising dentist or dental specialist as part of the provision of overall integrated care to the adult patient group. Dental therapists and dentists/specialists normally work from the same premises providing a team approach. Clinical guidance may be provided at a distance but appropriate access must be available to ensure that the dentist or specialist is able to provide guidance and advice, when required and maintain general oversight of the clinical care outcomes of the adult patient group.

<sup>4</sup> Currently no training programmes have been accredited.

approved experience in the provision of oral healthcare to adults under direction and supervision of a dentist, who can attest to competency.

*Prescribed qualifications for practising under direct clinical supervision:*

Currently no training programmes have been accredited.