



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Dietitians Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency and Practice Placement Criteria

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Supporting CORU documentation

The following documents must be read in conjunction with each other by applicants for recognition of professional qualifications:

- The application form for recognition of international qualifications
- Guidance notes for recognition of international qualifications
- Standards of proficiency and criteria for practice placements

Background

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended) (HSCP Act, 2005) provides for the establishment of a Dietitians Registration Board, whose functions include establishing and maintaining a Register. Registration will allow a person to use the protected title.

The object of the Dietitians Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among dietitians registrants (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)).

Statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of dietetics and will ensure that members of the public are guided, protected and informed, so that they can be confident that Dietitians providing services are properly regulated and qualified for the job.

This system of statutory regulation is designed to ensure professional conduct and the maintenance of high standards of professional education and training among the Dietitians, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector or are self-employed.

All applicants who hold professional qualifications gained outside the Republic of Ireland (ROI) must first have their qualification recognised by the Dietitians Registration Board before an application for registration can be made.

Standards of proficiency and Irish approved qualifications

One of the functions of the Dietitians Registration Board is to set the standards of proficiency for Dietitians. The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards required for the safe and appropriate practice of the profession in Ireland. They are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional attributes for the safe practice of the profession. The standards of proficiency are the standards required for all entrants to the register.

Irish approved qualifications for entry to the register are at the following level:

- NFQ Level 8, honours Bachelor of Science degree in Human Nutrition and Dietetics

The Dietitians Registration Board set standards for the delivery of education and training in Ireland for Dietitians. It approves and monitor programmes against these standards. Graduates from an approved programme meet the Standards of Proficiency for Dietitians and are eligible to apply for registration. Please see the CORU website for the list of current approved Irish programmes.

Recognition of professional qualifications obtained outside Republic of Ireland

If you were awarded your qualification outside the (ROI) and are interested in working here you must firstly apply to the Dietitians Registration Board to have your qualification recognised. **You cannot apply for registration until your qualification is recognised.**

The Dietitians Registration Board is designated as the Competent Authority under European Union (EU) legislation - Directive 2005/36/EC for the purposes of recognition of professional qualifications for applicants from the European Economic Area (EEA).

A Competent Authority under EU legislation is any authority or body e.g. regulatory body or professional body empowered by the State to validate professional qualifications. The Registration Board may also recognise professional qualifications from outside the EEA.

For further detailed information about Directive 2005/36/EC log on to the European Commission website: www.ec.europa.eu. Please also read the CORU Guidance notes regarding application for recognition of international qualifications.

Standards of proficiency

This section sets out the standards of proficiency required of graduates from an Irish approved programme for the safe and effective practice of the profession. They are the minimum standards necessary to protect the public and are required for entry to the Register.

They are also the standards of proficiency required of applicants with professional qualifications obtained outside ROI.

All applications for recognition of professional qualification (s) obtained outside of the ROI will be assessed against these standards of proficiency. Applicants must demonstrate to the Registration Board that their professional qualification(s) including any additional education and training and / or work experience gained in the profession meets the minimum standards of proficiency required. Evidence must be provided as part of the recognition application process.

The standards of proficiency explain the key obligations for a graduate in the profession and are accompanied by specific indicators, which provide more detail. The standards are highlighted in bold i.e. 2.1 with the specific indicators listed below them i.e. a, b, c...

These standards of proficiency are the intended learning outcomes which a professional qualification must meet. A diverse range of potential programmes and programme learning outcomes will be compatible with these standards.

The standards of proficiency are grouped under six domains:

- Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability
- Domain 2: Interpersonal and professional relationships
- Domain 3: Effective communication
- Domain 4: Personal and professional development
- Domain 5: Provision of quality services
- Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Domain 1: Professional Autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

Criteria

- 1. Practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession to the highest standard.**
 - a) Act in the best interest of service users at all times and within the boundaries of their profession.
 - b) Respect and, so far as possible, uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process.
 - c) Provide and articulate professional and ethical practice.
 - d) Practise in accordance with current legislation applicable to the work of their profession.
 - e) Contribute to the development of effective, ethical and equitable policy and practise, regarding issues addressed by the Dietetic profession.
 - f) Understand the implications of duty of care for service users and professionals.
 - g) Understand the principles of professional regulation and the provisions of the Dietitians Registration Board *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*.
 - h) Manage themselves, their practise and that of others in accordance with the Dietitians Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.
- 2. Practise in a non-discriminatory way.**
 - a) Acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups.
 - b) Promote equality and respect, without prejudice, and practise in a culturally competent, non-discriminatory and inclusive manner.
 - c) Assist in the promotion and implementation of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers with particular reference to the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Domain 1: Professional Autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

3. Understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality.

- a) Respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given.
- b) Understand confidentiality within a team setting.
- c) Understand the limits of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse.
- d) Be aware of data protection, freedom of information and other relevant legislation.
- e) Understand the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing.

4. Understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent.

- a) Demonstrate competence in gaining informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions.
- b) Understand issues associated with informed consent with individuals who are not capable of giving informed consent.
- c) Maintain accurate records relating to consent.
- d) Respect the rights of the service user.

5. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care/service.

- a) Recognise personal responsibility for one's actions and be able to justify reasons for professional decisions made.
- b) Understand the need to maintain the highest standards of personal/professional conduct.

Domain 1: Professional Autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

- 6. Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgment.**
 - a) Know the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice or refer to another professional.
 - b) Recognise the need for consultation and/or supervision.
 - c) Be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the situation.
 - d) Be able to initiate appropriate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative.
 - e) Recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions.
- 7. Recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practice accordingly.**
 - a) Understand the demands that are placed on the professional practitioner in a given field and the skills required to practise effectively with the workload and available resources.
 - b) Recognise the responsibility of the professional practitioner to take appropriate action where performance of self and/or others is compromised.
- 8. Understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise.**
 - a) Understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice.
 - b) Understand the importance of maintaining their physical and mental health.
 - c) Understand the importance of keeping skills and knowledge up to date over a lifetime of practise.

Domain 2: Interpersonal and professional relationships

Graduates will:

- 1. Work, in partnership, with service users and their relatives/carers, and other professionals.**
 - a) Demonstrate capacity to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team.
 - b) Demonstrate capacity to engage service users and carers in assessment and treatment to meet their needs and goals.
 - c) Recognise and understand the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users.
 - d) Be able to make appropriate referrals.

- 2. Contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of teams (multi-disciplinary, inter-professional, multi-service or inter-agency)**
 - a) Demonstrate professional collaboration, consultation and decision making in multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-service and inter-agency teams.
 - b) Demonstrate an understanding that professional relationships with professional colleagues can impact on service delivery and therefore should be based on mutual respect and trust.
 - c) Demonstrate ability to maintain standards of care in situations of personal incompatibility.

Domain 3: Effective communication

Graduates will:

- 1. Demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, listening, giving advice, instruction and professional opinion.**
 - a) Understand how communication skills affect the interaction with service users and clients and how channels of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.
 - b) Understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary in an appropriate format to enable them to make informed decisions.
 - c) Be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, including listening skills, with service users and others.
 - d) Demonstrate an appropriate use of information technology.
 - e) Demonstrate the ability to produce clear, concise and objective written communication and reports.
 - f) Understand the importance of and demonstrate effective communication with other colleagues (inter-disciplinary communication).
 - g) Understand the importance of communicating to management any identified risk to service users and/or those involved in their care, in line with the policies and procedures in force in the workplace.
 - h) Recognise the need to involve and know how to obtain an appropriate interpreter to assist clients/ service users with language difficulties.
 - i) Be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.

Domain 3: Effective communication

Graduates will:

- 2. Understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user**
 - a) Recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to facilitate the active participation of service users.
 - b) Show effectiveness when communicating with service users and an ability to manage conflict and resistance.
 - c) Demonstrate competence in presenting professional judgements and information in a variety of contexts.
 - d) Use effective communication to build and maintain relationships.

Domain 4: Personal and professional development

Graduates will:

- 1. Understand the role of reflective practice in relation to personal and professional development.**
 - a) Understand the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection.
 - b) Be able to reflect critically on personal practice.
 - c) Be aware of the need to ensure that personal life experiences and personal value systems do not impact inappropriately on one's decision making or actions.
 - d) Understand the role, purpose and function of supervision and the importance of seeking supervision of practice.
 - e) Actively avail of opportunities for feedback, mentoring and support from colleagues in order to continuously improve personal practice.
 - f) Take responsibility for personal and professional development.
 - g) Develop and critically review a personal development plan which takes account of personal and professional needs.
 - h) Identify and avail of opportunities to promote professional development of self, colleagues and teams and the broader development of disciplines.
 - i) Understand the role of performance management as part of on-going professional development and effective service delivery.
 - j) Understand the role of continuing professional development and demonstrate commitment to life-long learning.
 - k) Recognise the need to contribute to policy and development of the profession.

Domain 5: Provision for quality services

Graduates will:

- 1. Be able to identify and assess service user needs.**
 - a) Be able to gather appropriate information.
 - b) Select and use appropriate and specific assessment techniques: undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment.
 - c) Undertake or arrange investigations, as appropriate.
 - d) Analyse and critically evaluate the information collected.

- 2. Formulate and deliver plans and strategies to meet identified needs of service users.**
 - a) Develop and implement appropriate plans, interventions and strategies, according to best available evidence, agreed national guidelines, protocols and pathways, where available.
 - b) Identify needs and resources required to implement effective management/intervention of plans.
 - c) Agree goals in partnership with service users where appropriate, based on individual needs.

- 3. Use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate action.**
 - a) Recognise the value of research in the systematic evaluation of practice and in developing evidence informed practice.
 - b) Engage in evidence informed practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit/review procedures.
 - c) Use a range of research and evaluative methodologies, including evidence based practice research.
 - d) Demonstrate sound clinical/professional decision-making drawing on evidence, knowledge, experience, professional opinion and service user input.
 - e) Recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions.
 - f) Demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving.

Domain 5: Provision for quality services

Graduates will:

- 4. Draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements.**
 - a) Understand the need to adjust/adapt their practice as needed to take account of developments in knowledge and practice.
 - b) Demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate the Dietetics profession.
- 5. Formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales.**
 - a) Demonstrate an ability to formulate specific and appropriate advice tailored to individuals or groups.
 - b) Understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors.
- 6. Conduct appropriate assessment/diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skillfully.**
 - a) Understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care.
 - b) Empower service users to manage their well-being and recognise the need to provide advice to the patient/client/user on self-treatment with appropriate supports.
- 7. Implement best practice in record management.**
 - a) Maintain accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines.
 - b) Be aware and follow data protection requirements when maintaining records on service users.
 - c) Understand the need to use accepted terminology in making records.

Domain 5: Provision for quality services

Graduates will:

- 8. Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the professional's actions.**
- 9. Monitor and review the on-going effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly.**
 - a) Gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data that help to evaluate the responses of service users to their interventions.
 - b) Evaluate intervention plans using tools and recognised performance/outcome measures. Revise the plans as necessary, and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user.
 - c) Recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement of programmes, clinical audit and research.
 - d) Recognise important factors and risk management measures, learn from adverse events and be able to disseminate learning.
 - e) Make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions/techniques/courses of action and record decisions and reasoning.
- 10. Be able to evaluate, audit, and review practice.**
 - a) Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement.
 - b) Be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including the use of appropriate outcome measures.
 - c) Monitor and evaluate performance by conducting regular audits and reviews in accordance with national guidelines/best practice and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews.
 - d) Participate in quality assurance programmes where appropriate.
 - e) Understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection including the evaluation of impact/response to the professional's actions.
 - f) Recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review.

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

- 1. Know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to the profession.**
- a) Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant biological, behavioural, communications and social sciences; to include knowledge in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, of:
 - Human health and disease, disorder and dysfunction
 - Methods commonly used in scientific research, including the research process and critical evaluation of research papers
 - The evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy
 - The basis for evidence-informed practice
 - Models of behavioural change, empowerment and health promotion
 - Appropriate educational and communication strategies
- b) Understand pre-clinical sciences in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, including:
 - Biochemistry
 - Genetics
 - Immunology
 - Microbiology
 - Pathophysiology
 - Pharmacology
 - Physiology
- c) Understand clinical sciences in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, including:
 - Clinical chemistry
 - Clinical haematology
 - Clinical immunology
 - Clinical microbiology
- d) Understand the following core elements of nutrition and dietetic practice, including:
 - Research methodology
 - Nutritional sciences
 - Food and nutrition in the human life-cycle
 - Food consumption patterns
 - Nutritional analysis and interpretation of food intake records
 - Nutritional epidemiology
 - Public health nutrition
 - Clinical medicine, including the medical and surgical management of common medical and surgical disorders
 - Community dietetics
 - Clinical dietetics
 - Dietetic service management

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

- e) Understand food safety and food service in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, including:
 - Food hygiene
 - Food science
 - Food skills
 - Factors influencing food choice
 - Menu planning
 - Food systems management

- f) Demonstrate professional collaboration in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, to include, including:
 - The roles of other workers in the health services
 - Consultation and decision-making in multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-service and inter-agency teams

- g) Understand the theoretical basis of and the variety of approaches to assessment, diagnosis, intervention and monitoring in healthcare.

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

- 2. Have knowledge of how professional principles are expressed and translated into action, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of individuals, groups or communities**
 - a) Be aware of national and international guidelines and standards of practice applicable to provision of high-quality nutrition and dietetic services.
 - b) Appreciate the importance and application of evidence-based practice.
 - c) Use appropriate assessment techniques to determine the nutrition and dietetic needs of service users, both individuals and groups.
 - d) Be able to implement, evaluate and modify nutrition and dietetics interventions, using appropriate methods.
 - e) Engage in effective group-work where appropriate, based on the needs of service users

- 3. Have the knowledge and skills required to maintain the safety of service users, staff and self.**
 - a) Be aware of the applicable legislation (for example health and safety legislation, employment legislation) and relevant national guidelines.
 - b) Work safely, including being able to select and implement appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner, in accordance with health and safety legislation, policy and regulation.
 - c) Establish safe environments in which risk can be minimised for service users and staff.
 - d) Understand, recognise and be able to manage risk associated with nutrition and dietetic interventions.
 - e) Understand systems and the impact of their complexity on service user care.
 - f) Understand the importance of communication with service users and staff in the context of health and safety.
 - g) Undertake appropriate health and safety training.

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

- 4. Know and understand health services structures and functions.**
 - a) Structure and function of national health and social care services

- 5. Understand the role of nutrition and dietetics in the development and implementation of policy on health, food and nutrition.**
 - a) Have knowledge of national and international health legislation, policy and regulation
 - b) Have knowledge of national and international food legislation, policy and regulation
 - c) Structures and key stakeholders influencing legislation, policy and regulation
 - d) Importance of advocacy on behalf of individuals and groups to positively influence the wider political, social and commercial environment relating to nutrition and health.

Practice placement

Criterion:

Practice placement learning is mandatory and an essential part of any dietetic educational programme leading to registration as a dietitian. It facilitates the integration of theory with practice in graded developmental stages throughout the programmes.

Practice placement learning enables the student to acquire the standards of proficiency for the dietetic profession and become safe, competent practitioners willing to accept personal and professional accountability for their work. Learning initially developed within the academic component of the dietetic profession must be integrated into practice through the experience and supervision offered by structured placements within dietetic settings. A partnership approach between the education provider and the dietetics practice placement is essential. Practice placement education is an integral component of professional education and training programmes.

Indicators:

- a) The number of placement hours chosen must be appropriate to the design of the curriculum and ensure that the students learning experience enables them to meet the Standards of Proficiency. Students must undertake not less than 1,000 hours of practice placements.
- b) The site of the practice placement should reflect the breadth and diversity and working environments of graduate dietitians but must include some time in acute hospital and in primary care dietetics placements, public health and/or health promotion and food service institutions.
- c) The number, duration and range of practice placements should be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the standards of proficiency. At least one placement should be of sufficient length to enable continuity of learning and demonstrate consistency of performance and case load management in a clinical setting. This placement should usually be not less than 400 hours and should be completed within the final year of the programme.
- d) The selection of practice placements provided by the education provider in conjunction with service agencies reflects the scope of the settings, including any statutory settings, in which the profession normally operates.
- e) The education provider will have a set of criteria for the selection of placements to ensure quality learning environments for students. The educator will work in partnership with the practice placement provider and will make a formal agreement that clearly sets out the responsibilities of both parties on an annual basis.
- f) On-going reviews of practice placements will ensure that placements provide a safe and supportive environment, high quality professional practice and opportunities for the

student to experience direct contact with service users. Students and the practice education team will have a role in this review process.

- g) Supervision will be provided to students by the practice education team.
- h) Students and the practice education team will be fully informed and prepared for the practice placements.
- i) While on placement, appropriate support and supervision should be maintained with the student by the practice education team.
- j) Programme providers must ensure that practice educators will have relevant practice experience and competence in the area which they are supervising.
- k) The core dietetics team and the dietetics practice education team are required to be registered on the Dietitians Register. Education providers will be required to provide details of the dietetics team and all other members of the core programme team and the practice education team. This indicator will take effect following the close of the transitional period.
- l) Support and training will be available to the practice education team to develop their practice education skills in relation to facilitating students on placement
- m) Student allocation to practice placements is based on the need to integrate theory and practice and to facilitate the progressive development of the standards of proficiency for the profession. The standards of proficiency are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional qualities that are required of graduates from an approved programme for the safe and appropriate practice of the profession. They are the minimum standards for entry to the profession. The standards and proficiency learnt in this way should be transferable between situations, contexts and institutions.
- n) Pre-placement requirements must be in place including Garda vetting, vaccinations, health and safety and occupational health requirements.
- o) Policies and procedures are in place for the assessment of students on practice placements, including appeal mechanisms for failed placements.
- p) A code of conduct should be in place for students whilst on placement.