

Continuing Competency

Under the HPCA Act, registered health professionals will be required to demonstrate their competency in order to be issued with an APC. Dietitians have an established history of engaging in continuing competency activities. Now this is required by law.

What to do

- **Use the Continuing Competency Programme August 2002 Edition.**

This is available online at www.dietitiansboard.co.nz, or directly from the Board.

- **Develop a learning plan.** This plan is a self-assessment of competence, identifying gaps or areas of possible improvement in knowledge or skills, and identifying objectives and related activities. The plan is private and does not need to be submitted for audit unless you are returning to work after a break of three years or more, or have a significant change in your area of practice, in which case the Board would want to review your plan.

- **Choose a mentor.** This is optional but recommended. Your mentor does not need to be a dietitian but does need to be someone who can provide guidance.

- **Categories and Learning Activities.**

Keep records of all activities under these categories, as these records will be required when you are audited.

Note – practice reviews should involve an external person.

- **Credits.** 75 credits are required at the end of a five year period, and these 75 credits must include minimums as follows:
 - 37 credits from Continuing Education
 - 15 credits from Practice Review
 - 23 credits (optional) from Additional Professional / Personal Development.

The ratio of credits is required to be met by the end of the five year period.

Contacting the Dietitians Board ...

Contact with the Board is through its Wellington office at:
Level 21, Grand Plimmer Tower
2-6 Gilmer Terrace
Wellington

Post all correspondence to the:
Dietitians Board
PO Box 10-140
Wellington, NZ

Phone (04) 499 7979 (Reception)
Fax (04) 472 2350
Email dietitians@regboards.co.nz
Website www.dietitiansboard.org.nz

Key personnel are:
Registrar and
Deputy Registrar:
Appointments Pending

In the next newsletter
– registration of overseas-trained dietitians
– outcome of the report on accreditation.



- The number of credits required will be on a **pro-rata basis**. For example, if you have taken part in the continuing competency programme for six months, you would be expected to submit a minimum of 5 credits.

If you have been advised of a pending audit, and you are planning to leave the country or stop working for a time, please contact the Board to discuss audit arrangements.

A key requirement of the Continuing Competency Programme is for you to demonstrate that you have worked a minimum of 100 working days or 750 hours in the last five years in an area of dietetic practice. A signed statement at the end of the five-year period declaring this will be required.

Annual Practising Certificate

Under the Act, all registered health professionals are required to demonstrate recency of practice. Notwithstanding the five-year period required by the dietitians Continuing Competency Programme, section 27 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 requires all health practitioners to be able to demonstrate recency of practice. This means that everyone covered by the Act will need to be in a position to show their Board that in the last three years they have:

- held an APC, and
- maintained the required standard of competence, and
- lawfully practised as a dietitian.

If you have not held an annual practising certificate in the last three years and / or have not practised in the last three years, and wish to return to work, you will need to contact the Board to discuss a return to work programme. The Board will consider applications on a case by case basis.

- **A minimum of 10 credits** is required each year, and these need to be submitted as evidence that you are taking part in the continuing competency programme when your APC is renewed. However, in order to be on target, *aim for at least 15 credits per year.*

- **Submitting credits.** Your Annual Credit Report Form is submitted with your APC renewal application. This is a personal statement, but you may wish to have your mentor or a senior colleague co-sign it.

As a result of the formative audit, work is in progress reviewing the Annual Credit Report Form. It will look similar to the Annual Credit Report Form on the website, with the addition of a column for evidence. The APC application form detailing requirements, and the Manual on Policies and Procedures for Continuing Competency will also be posted on the Board's website in July.

Audits

- Every practising dietitian will be audited at least once every five years.
- **The first audit under the HPCA Act will be carried out on 31 October 2004.** It is proposed that the audit will be a helpful, informative, and evaluative process, and great effort will be made by the Board to work in a supportive and consultative manner with practitioners throughout the process. It is not intended to be, and should not be, viewed as a punitive process.
- Dietitians randomly selected for this audit will be advised in **July 2004** and asked to submit audit documentation i.e. evidence to support learning credits at 3, 4 and 5 level.

New Zealand Dietitians Board

REPORT TO THE PROFESSION

Comments from the Chair

Dear Colleagues

As I write my first letter as Chair of the Dietitians Board, I now appreciate the huge amount of work that Lyn Gillanders achieved as Board Chair. Lyn anticipated the need to push forward with forming and implementing policies and procedures to meet the demands of the new HPCA legislation. I do not think any of us realised the full extent of the work required. Thank you, Lyn, for your leadership.

In her last newsletter, Lyn reported on the excellent response by practitioners in defining a scope for dietetic practice. The result of the final scopes consultation with practitioners indicated that the first option was preferred; this option was modified after noting comments from respondents.

The Scope Statement that has been adopted is:

Dietitians apply scientific knowledge about food and nutrition to individuals and groups in states of health and disease to promote optimal health outcomes within the social, economic and cultural context of the New Zealand population.

Qualifications

Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics; or equivalent qualification and pass in a Board examination.

Competencies

Statement of Registration Competency Requirements

The Scope will be gazetted in August 2004 and will be printed on APCs from April 2005.

In recommending this scope statement to the Board, the Board's committee noted that the



Barbara Ryan

"Statement tested for all possible dietetic occupations – as far as the consultation group can tell it is inclusive and should be appropriate for the foreseeable future." I would like to acknowledge Lyn Gillanders, Jane Cartwright, Winsome Parnell, Vernon Tile, Mary McNab and Helen Wallwork who have worked through the process to achieve a scope that is a defining statement for dietetics.

The Revised Statement of Registration Competency Requirements has been included with this newsletter. Please take time to read this document. The document describes the minimum level of acceptable performance as a dietitian. The University of Otago is considering the implications of this review on the delivery of the curriculum from the beginning of 2005.

The Board's Education and Accreditation Committee appreciated comments received from the profession, which assisted the process of review.

The Accreditation Report is currently with the University of Otago. The Board expects a response with recommendations from the University to consider at the July Board meeting, and an executive report will be released to the profession in due course.

Significant progress has been achieved in the Continuing Competency Programme, with full implementation expected in 2004–05.

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JUNE 2004

The Board has decided to undertake the first audit on 31 October 2004. This is necessary to gather information for the CCP programme review to be completed by June 2005.

Dietitians to be audited will be notified in July. If you are selected for audit, the Board expectation is for you to send us what you have. The number of credits required will be treated on a pro rata basis from the date you commenced your CC programme. The intention of the Board is to approach this first audit in a supportive manner.

The Board needs to appoint auditors and is seeking expressions of interest from dietitians willing to be auditors. For further details, please contact Makuini McKerchar.

The Board would also like names of dietitians in each region to act as local contacts for continuing competency questions. To update dietitians willing to take on this role, a half-day workshop in Wellington is planned. If you were a volunteer in the 2003 audit and are willing to assist colleagues as a continuing competency resource dietitian in your region, please contact Makuini McKerchar. Makuini's email address is makuini.mckerchar@sdhb.govt.nz

Please read the section in this newsletter for further information on continuing competency.

The Registration and Assessment Committee is reviewing the policies and procedures for the registration of overseas-trained dietitians' applications for registration in New Zealand. The revised registration policy, information and application forms will be posted on the website in due course.

Finally, I would like to welcome Avis McIntosh and, more recently, Mary McNab to the Board. Avis is a lay member of the Board and is an excellent representative consumer of dietetic practice. Mary brings with her a broad understanding of the dietetic profession and I know both Avis and Mary will be valuable members of the Dietitians Board.



Barbara Ryan
Chair
Dietitians Board

The NZ Dietitians Board

Who is on the Board?

The Board now comprises seven members being:

- a) Three registered dietitians engaged in the practice of dietetics in New Zealand; and
- b) Four other persons of whom –
 - (i) One (but not more than one) may be a dietitian engaged in the practice of dietetics in New Zealand; and
 - (ii) One (but not more than one) may be a person involved in dietetic education.

The current Board is:

Barbara Ryan of Blenheim

(Board Chair)

Gwenda Kingsland of Napier

(Board Deputy Chair)

Avis McIntosh of Invercargill

Makuini McKerchar of Invercargill

Mary McNab of Whangarei

Winsome Parnell of Dunedin

Vernon Tile of Wellington

Board Chair and Deputy

Following Lyn Gillanders's retirement from membership of the Board, the Dietitians Board at its January 2004 meeting elected Barbara Ryan as Board Chair, and Gwenda Kingsland as Deputy.

Dietitians Board website

The Dietitians Board website contains news and information of interest to the profession, including on continuing competency, and has links for updates on the HPCA Act. The website can also be used to notify the Board of changes of address or practising status.

The Board's website address is:

www.dietitiansboard.org.nz

Committees of the Board

There are committees that undertake various legislative functions and advise the Board on relevant matters.

These committees are:

- Policy and Standards Committee. (This was recently disbanded as its major functions have been completed. Ongoing policy and standards development is now the responsibility of Gwenda Kingsland, and setting standards of cultural competence is being facilitated by Makuini McKerchar.)
- Registration and Assessment Committee.
- Education and Accreditation Committee
- Finance and Administration Committee.
- Continuing Competence Committee.

In addition, the Board has procedures in place to facilitate the establishment of a Professional Conduct Committee and a Complaints Committee should one or both of these become necessary at any time in the future.

Annual Practising Certificates

Despite continued prudent financial management, the Board reluctantly increased the APC fee for the 2004/2005 year to \$400.

This was made necessary by the increased costs faced by the Board in order to carry out the requirements of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, particularly in the areas of changing processes for APC renewals, and monitoring ongoing competence in the profession.

The Board notes that this was the first increase in the APC fee for a decade.

Scopes of Practice Consultation

The scope evolved from a major consultation exercise undertaken by the Board, which involved everyone who was or had been on the register of dietitians being asked for their views.

The consultation document offered two proposed scopes of practice for dietitians to indicate a preference for, and asked respondents to offer their thoughts on alternative or additional wording. Respondents were also asked if having just the one scope of practice would be adequate in terms of public safety, as well as the possible qualifications and/or experience for one or more scopes.

The response was impressive. Out of 1047 sent out, 521 solicited a response.

Overall, responses focused on the proposed scopes of practice and almost 44% of currently registered dietitians favoured the first option, which was somewhat longer than the second and included references to optimal nutrition, and to the context within which dietetic practice occurs. Just under half as many favoured option 2. However, most responses also indicated that both proposed wordings adequately described the activities of registered dietitians.

Many respondents indicated a desire to emphasise the scientific basis of dietetics. A significant number suggested that the reference to science in option 2 be incorporated into the preferred option 1. This view was ultimately incorporated into the scope with the words "scientific knowledge" being inserted.

"I like the wording of option 2 but it needs to include "obtaining health" ... as a community dietitian, I see people post-hospital admission and assist them to obtain their previous level of health."

The profession gave a clear indication that the scope should mention the relevance of dietetics to health, rather than purely to the treatment and prevention of disease. However, it was also felt that maintaining the inclusion of the word "disease" was vital in terms of making it clear that dietetic practice does not include the work of naturopaths and nutritionists.

Similarly, the term "health outcomes through optimal nutrition" was felt to be rather cumbersome. The committee therefore changed the phrase to "optimal health outcomes" to draw focus to the acceptable and appropriate outcomes for individuals.

"I feel that it is important for dietetics as a profession to increase the breadth of our skill mix, not to limit it."

Many respondents felt that the insertion of the word "food" into the scope was vital.

Respondents indicated that including the context of dietetic practice in the scope statement was important, with many respondents suggesting the inclusion of the consideration of clients' backgrounds, including ethnicity, and belief systems. The term "cultural" was ultimately used to ensure these considerations were adequately covered. The committee members who worked on and refined the scope statement also included the "economic" context to recognise the clients' circumstances as well as the usefulness of the term in respect of policy and funding guidelines, a particularly necessary matter for those dietitians working in the public health system.

Respondents had some differing comments regarding where dietetic practice takes place, with the areas of practice in the private sector – including consultancy work – noted, as

"The scope needs to reflect the three "wings" of dietetics: clinical nutrition, public health nutrition, and food service management."

well as those in the public health system and the community at large. Noting that the responses indicated that there appears to be no limit to where and with whom in New Zealand dietetic practice can occur, it was ultimately decided to include the phrase "the New Zealand population" to describe the arena for dietetic practice.

Responses indicated that the profession generally felt that a possible specialised scope of practice was not necessary. However, there was some feedback that highly specialised activities, such as enteral and parenteral feeding, could be likely candidates for such a scope should one be adopted in future. Some respondents indicated that the differing fields of dietetic practice – such as sports nutrition, clinical practice or food service management work – could arguably constitute specialties within the profession.

The document also asked respondents about the qualifications or experience that could lead to or maintain competency in any proposed specialised scope of practice. Many respondents indicated that the current qualifications meet any specialty within the profession, but a number also felt that additional study or, more often, experience could be taken to indicate training and competency in a speciality.

At the conclusion of their work on the scope statement arising from the consultation, the committee tested the resulting statement against all possible dietetic occupations. After further discussion and refinement, the final statement was considered to be inclusive and appropriate for the foreseeable future.