

Introduction

The Dietitians Board of New Zealand is appointed by the Minister of Health under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. The principal purpose of this Act is to protect the health and safety of members of the public, by providing for mechanisms to ensure that dietitians are competent and fit to practise their profession.

Section 7 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 informs the reader that:

- (1) A person may only use names, words, titles, initials, abbreviations, or descriptions stating or implying that the person is a dietitian if the person is registered, and is qualified to be registered, as a dietitian.
- (2) No person may claim to be practising dietetics as a dietitian or state or do anything that is calculated to suggest that the person practises or is willing to practise dietetics as a dietitian unless the person –
 - (a) is a dietitian; and
 - (b) holds a current practising certificate as a dietitian.

Contacts

The Dietitians Board can be contacted at:

Level 21
Grand Plimmer Tower
2-6 Gilmer Terrace
P O Box 10-140
Wellington
New Zealand

Daytime phone number:

+64 4 474 0746
or
+64 4 499 7979

Fax:

+64 4 472 2350

Email:

dietitians@regboards.co.nz

www.dietitiansboard.org.nz



**Dietitians
Board (New Zealand)**

MAY 2006

Board Functions

The prime functions of the Dietitians Board are to:

- prescribe qualifications for scopes of practice for dietitians;
- accredit and monitor educational institutions and programmes;
- grant registration to dietitians and issue practising certificates;
- review and promote the competence of dietitians; and
- deal with cases of dietitians who may be unable to perform professionally.

Scope of Practice

A Scope of Practice means any health service that forms part of a health profession.

The board has defined one Scope of Practice, which is that:

“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.”

The qualifications required to be a registered dietitian in New Zealand are:

- A Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics; or
- Equivalent qualification and a pass in a Board examination.

Dietitians wishing to practise in New Zealand must, by law, be registered with the Dietitians Board and must hold a current practising certificate.

Employers of dietitians need to be aware of their responsibility to check that their employees have dietetic registration and a current practising certificate.

Employers should check the registration status of graduating student dietitians, who may need to be employed initially as intern dietitians before their registration and practising certificates are approved. This means that the work of intern dietitians must be countersigned by a supervising dietitian.

District Health Boards may meet the costs of practising certificates and sometimes the costs of registration of dietitians employed by them.

The website for the Dietitians Board, explains the role of the Board, the process for dietitian registration and practise and the procedure for handling complaints against dietitians. The website is www.dietitiansboard.org.nz.

Board Membership

The Board's membership may comprise a minimum of five persons and a maximum of 14 persons as determined by the Minister of Health. The membership must include:

- A majority of members who are health practitioners.
- Two or three laypersons depending on the size of the board.

The Board usually has seven members – five from the dietetics profession and two laypersons, who are listed on the Board website.

The Board is supported by its Registrar.

Board Committees and Functions

The Board has a number of committees working on specific tasks, which they report on to the Board.

Committees and tasks are:

- **Education and Accreditation Committee:** This committee reviews the education programmes offered in New Zealand that prepare students for registration as Dietitians, as well as researching current tools for accrediting educational institutions and their degrees, courses or programmes, and makes the resulting recommendations on processes to the Board.
- **Registration and Assessment Committee:** This committee determines what evidence applicants for registration will have to submit and works on the establishment of procedures for assessing qualifications & processing applications.

- **Finance and Administration Committee:** This committee governs the Board's public relations, including the design and production management of forms & publications. They review and set the fees charged by the Board. They also develop administrative processes to ensure efficiency and review the Board's website and other communications.

- **Continuing Competence Committee:** This committee's role is to determine the required standard of competence, what areas competence must be shown in and to determine how it is to be proved to the Board, and all aspects of how the Continuing Competency Programme is run.

- **Complaints Committee:** This committee is responsible for any disciplinary matters or complaints needing investigation.

The Board has procedures in place to facilitate the establishment of a Professional Conduct Committee should this become necessary at any time in the future.