



New Zealand Dietitians Board
Te Mana Mātanga Mātai Kai

Information for New Zealand Graduating Students

Introduction

Dietitians are healthcare professionals regulated under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act). To practice as a Dietitian in New Zealand you must be registered with the Dietitians Board **and** hold an Annual Practising Certificate (APC). The registration process is therefore in two parts:

1. Apply for registration
2. Once you are registered, apply for a practising certificate or make a non-practising declaration

You must be registered and hold a current APC if you intend to practice dietetics in New Zealand. This applies even if you intend to practice for only part of the year, or to work part-time – even if you are only practising for one day of the year. It also applies to voluntary or other unpaid work.

The Board has a number of resources to help new graduates understand registration on its website; dietitiansboard.org.nz. Please take the time to read these through as it is important you understand the implications of being registered and the need for an APC – you do not want to be practising in breach of the HPCA Act at the start of your dietetic career.

Registration

You can apply for registration once you have completed your course of study and handed in your thesis for:

- **Masters of Dietetics** from the University of Otago
- **Master of Science (Nutrition and Dietetics)** from Massey University
- **Master of Health Sciences in Nutrition and Dietetics** from Auckland University

The **NZ Graduate Registration form** can be found on the Dietitians Board Website under Fees & Forms. A filled Criminal Conviction Check form must also be submitted with your application, which will be referred on by the Board to the Ministry of Justice.

Note: Please do not ask your head of programme to provide a character reference as they will automatically provide a fitness to practice reference when they confirm successful course completion.

Note: as stated on the Registration application form, certified copies must be certified or notarised 'as a true copy of the original' by a **Solicitor, Notary Public or Justice of the Peace** (not by the Police, Post Office or other person). It must be obvious who the certifying person is and include a stamp or seal.

Note: Notification from the Head of Dietetic Training that you have completed all the course requirements of the Masters degree will be sent to the Board **directly** by your University. The Board cannot complete the Registration until it has received this notification. Sometimes this notification is not received until March/April (or later in some cases).

The Board will notify you of any outstanding application documentation and keep you updated on the process of your application. Once you are registered, you will be invited to apply for an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) or make a Non-Practising Declaration. Please do not send forms / payment for an APC with your registration – they are separate processes.

Timelines for registration application

The Board recognises that there is a delay between students finishing their degree studies and formal confirmation of successful completion. Applications for registration can be submitted as soon as you have submitted your thesis to ensure that references and criminal record checks can be obtained (third party criminal record checks for New Zealand take around a month to be processed). The Board cannot complete your application for registration until we have confirmation that you have successfully completed your course but by applying early we will have been able to process your preliminary information. You will also receive Board Newsletters and any other important notices once you have made an application for registration. Please keep in mind that during March all current practitioners must renew their Annual Practising Certificates; the Board is extremely busy at this time and application processing times may be longer.

Working after course completion but before registration

Please note the correct use of dietetic titles by those who work in a dietetic related role before they are registered/hold an Annual Practising Certificate (APC). 'Dietitian' is a protected term under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 and cannot be used in any title until an individual is both registered and holding a current APC. The term 'dietetic assistant' can be used.

Until you are registered with the Board you are not under its jurisdiction and so should discuss with your employer the mechanisms and checks needed to keep patients / clients, and you, safe during this interim period and be **very careful** not to infer you are a dietitian.

Once registered, the HPCA Act applies to you in full and you must hold an APC if you are working within the **Scope of Practice: Dietitian**. Therefore, if you have been working as above you must **WITHOUT ANY DELAY** apply and pay for an APC once you have received confirmation of your registration to ensure you do not work in breach of the HPCA Act – see below for further information about APCs. It is an individual's responsibility to pay for and obtain an APC, not an employers.

Annual Practising Certificate

Upon registration you will receive a letter from the Board detailing how to apply for your first APC through the Practitioners Portal online. Your first APC will run until 31 March following your application.

There is provision for part payment of APC fees for the period 1 December to 31 March, when the cost of an APC is reduced. No other part payments at any other time are applicable. Please, do not pay your APC fee at the same time as you pay for registration – the two processes are separate and the APC fee should be paid at the relevant stage, not in advance.

Even if your employer will be paying for your APC, it is **your** responsibility, not theirs, to ensure that a payment is made correctly and on time. Please remember this, especially at the time of annual APC renewals when the Board does not have the time to chase individuals for any late or missing payments. Failure to pay on time could delay your APC or mean that you could be practising illegally.

The renewal period begins on 1 March and ends on 31 March each year. All late applicants who practice on or after 1 April before the approval of a new APC, do so unlawfully. Please refer to the late renewal of Annual Practising Certificates policy on the Board's website for further information regarding this.

If you are not intending to practice immediately following registration, then you must make a **Non-Practising Declaration**. If you are in any doubt about whether to apply for an APC or make a Non-Practising Declaration, please contact the Board's office for advice.

Once you are registered you must either hold an APC or make a non-practising declaration every year.

Continuing Competence Programme

Continuing Competence must be undertaken by all practitioners while they are holding an APC. Practitioners must log all of their learning goals/activities and upload evidence on the MyCCP platform, through your Practitioner Portal. Please see the User Guide and other documents providing guidance for CCP on your online dashboard.

As a practitioner with a Prescribing Endorsement you must also be sure to complete the Board's annual prescribing update on MOODLE each year in order to be able to meet recertification requirements and renew your APC.

Practice Supervision

It is the Board's policy that entry-level dietitians receive practice supervision for the first year of working in NZ. This requirement is recorded as a Board condition under the HPCA Act and applicants for registration will be given an opportunity to comment on this during the registration process if they so wish. Supervision is a formal relationship between the supervisory partners, which **begins when the supervisee starts work**.

Please familiarise yourself with the Board's [Supervision Policy](#), and the [Supervision Online User Guide](#) found on the Practitioners Portal.

You are required to:

1. Notify the Board of your Practice Supervisor's name **before** starting work (if possible at the same time as applying for your APC).
2. Select your supervisor from the drop down list under My Supervision and ensure your supervisor completes their **Sign On** (done through their MyCCP) as soon as possible after you begin dietetic practice. Your 12 months of supervision commences at that Sign On. The Board's recommendation is that formal supervision is undertaken - at least initially, for an hour weekly.
3. At the end of your 12 month practice supervision period ensure that your supervisor completes their **Sign Off** to formally conclude your supervision. The Board can then remove the supervision condition from your APC. If you change or add supervisors at any time in the year, you must ensure that they Sign Off / Sign On through their Portal promptly to keep your supervision history updated.

At APC renewal time, your practice supervisor must approve your APC application. The practice supervision will review your learning goals, make comment about your progress and confirm that your credits accurately reflect the value of learning activities.

If you will be working in a situation where there is no readily available practice supervisor it remains your responsibility to find a practice supervisor.

If you have a Prescribing Endorsement on your APC you must undergo continued prescribing supervision and complete the annual prescriber update through MOODLE. You must select your prescribing supervisor from the drop down list under My Supervision. Please see the [Dietitian Prescriber Policy](#) for further information.

Updating Contact Information with the Board

The **Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act)** requires practitioners to provide the Board with accurate postal, residential, work and email addresses. It also requires that you keep these addresses up-to-date by making any changes through the Practitioners Portal.

Email is the primary channel of communication used by the Board for newsletters and notices of importance, and it is your responsibility to notify the Board of any changes to your contact email addresses.

You are also obliged by law to notify the Board's Registrar of any change of your name within one month of the change being officially confirmed. You must send in a copy of the document changing your name (e.g. marriage certificate) as evidence of your name change – scan & email is acceptable.

If you have any questions or require any assistance please email the Board at:

administration@dietitiansboard.org.nz or telephone (04) 474 0746.

Please keep up to date with relevant issues by checking the Dietitians Board website and newsletters:

www.dietitiansboard.org.nz

Understanding the Dietitians Board and Dietitians NZ

Even the most senior practitioners sometimes confuse the two organisations. The **Dietitians Board** is the Regulatory Authority and is charged with the duty to ensure that dietitians are qualified, competent and fit to practice dietetics, in order ensure public safety. Board members are appointed by the Minister of Health.

Dietitians NZ is a professional membership association for Dietitians in New Zealand that supports and promotes the profession of dietetics.

See the 'Know the Difference' publication under News & Publications on the website to find out more.

Useful Links

Webpages

[Understanding Registration and APCs](#)

[New Zealand Graduates](#)

[How is "practice" defined?](#)

[Registered Dietitian Obligations](#)

[Continuing Professional Development](#)

[FAQs](#)

Policy Documents

[NZ Graduate Deadlines: Registration and first APC](#)

[English Language Requirements](#)

[Holding an APC](#)

Publications

[How do I practice dietetics legally in NZ?](#)

[Registration as a Dietitian](#)

[Know the Difference: Dietitians Board vs Dietitians NZ](#)