

National Competency Standards for Dietitians in Australia

The National Competency Standards for Dietitians in Australia were originally published in 1993 and reviewed in 1998, 2005 and 2009. This revision was developed in 2014 and endorsed by Dietitians Australia (DA) in 2015.

The National Competency Standards for Dietitians in Australia are used to facilitate a shared understanding of competency. More specifically they may be used by:

Students to:

- Identify the relationship between their program of learning, assessment and program outcomes
- Determine what they are expected to do by the end of their university study (on entry to the profession)
- Guide their plans for professional development as part the Accredited Practising Dietitian program

Practitioners to:

- Provide a framework for assessment of students
- Guide professional development plans for the Accredited Practising Dietitian mentoring program
- Describe minimum performance in the workplace

Universities to:

- Design and implement dietetic education programs that are compliant with the DA Accreditation Standards
- Develop curricula and assessment strategies that are aligned with the Competency Standards
- Graduate entry-level dietetic practitioners that are competent against the Competency Standards.

DA to:

- Inform standards for accreditation of university programs
- Guide the assessment processes of dietitians whose qualifications are not from Australia and for dietitians returning to practice
- Describe safe performance in the workplace

By patients, clients and the community to:

- Establish the expected knowledge, skills and behaviours of dietitians and provide the standards against which the public can expect safe practice

Domain 1. Practises professionally

Key Tasks/Elements	Observable and/or measurable actions
1.1 Demonstrates safe practice	1.1.1 Reviews and evaluates the impact of own practice on improving nutritional health 1.1.2 Recognises own professional limitations and the profession's scope of practice and seeks assistance as necessary 1.1.3 Accepts responsibility for and manages, implements and evaluates own personal health and well-being 1.1.4 Shows a commitment to professional development and conduct and lifelong learning 1.1.5 Consistently demonstrates reflective practice in collaboration with supervisors, peers and mentors 1.1.6 Accepts responsibility for own actions 1.1.7 Demonstrates flexibility, adaptability and resilience and the ability to manage own emotions
1.2 Practises within ethical and legal frameworks	1.2.1 Exercises professional duty of care in accordance with relevant codes of conduct, ethical requirements and other accepted protocols 1.2.2 Demonstrates integrity, honesty and fairness 1.2.3 Prepares appropriate documentation according to accepted standards
1.3 Demonstrates professional leadership	1.3.1 Uses negotiation and conflict resolution skills when required 1.3.2 Develops and maintains a credible professional role by commitment to excellence of practice 1.3.3 Seeks, responds to, and provides, effective feedback 1.3.4 Participates in mentoring 1.3.5 Demonstrates initiative by being proactive and developing solutions to problems
1.4 Practises effectively	1.4.1 Applies organisational, business and management skills in the practice of nutrition and dietetics (effective time, workload and resource management) 1.4.2 Utilises suitable evaluation tools to review effectiveness of practice 1.4.3 Identifies and assesses risks, follows risk management protocols and develops basic risk management strategies for services 1.4.4 Utilises relevant technology and equipment efficiently, effectively and safely 1.4.5 Applies the principles of marketing to promote healthy eating and influence dietary change
1.5 Demonstrates cultural competence	1.5.1 Reflects on own culture, values and beliefs and their influence on practice 1.5.2 Seeks out culturally specific information to inform practice 1.5.3 Works respectfully with individuals, groups and/or populations from different cultures

Domain 2. Positively influences the health of individuals, groups and/or populations to achieve nutrition outcomes

Key Tasks/Elements	Observable and/or measurable actions
2.1 Applies an evidence-based approach to nutrition and dietetics services	2.1.1 Collects, analyses and interprets relevant health, medical, cultural, social, psychological, economic, personal, environmental, dietary intake, and food supply data in determining nutritional status 2.1.2 Makes appropriate nutrition diagnoses and identifies priority nutrition issues based on all available information 2.1.3 Prioritises key issues, formulates goals and objectives and prepares goal oriented plans in collaboration with patient/client or carer, community/population/service, other members of the health care team, key stakeholders and partners 2.1.4 Implements, evaluates and adapts nutrition care plans/programs/services in collaboration with patient/client or carer, community/population/service and other members of the health care team or key stakeholders and/or partners
2.2 Influences the food supply to improve the nutritional status of individuals, groups and/or populations	2.2.1 Applies an approach to practice that recognises the multi-factorial and interconnected determinants influencing nutrition and health 2.2.2 Identifies opportunities and advocates for change to the wider social, cultural and/or political environment to improve nutrition, food standards or the food supply in various settings 2.2.3 Acknowledges the multiple factors that influence food choice and the provision of service 2.2.4 Uses food legislation, regulations and standards to develop, implement and evaluate food systems to maintain food safety 2.2.5 Applies a socio-ecological approach to the development of strategies to improve nutrition and health
2.3 Facilitates optimal food choice and eating behaviours for health	2.3.1 Applies a highly developed knowledge of nutrition science, health and disease, food and food preparation methods to tailor recommendations to improve health of individuals, groups and/or populations 2.3.2 Displays effective active listening, interviewing and interpersonal skills to better understand perspectives of clients, carers, groups and key stakeholders to inform approaches and influence change 2.3.3 Uses client-centred counselling skills to negotiate and facilitate nutrition, behaviour and lifestyle change and empower clients with self-management skills

Domain 3. Applies critical thinking and integrates evidence into practice

Key Tasks/Elements	Observable and/or measurable actions
3.1 Uses best available evidence to inform practice	3.1.1 Adopts a questioning and critical approach in all aspects of practice 3.1.2 Gathers, critiques, uses and shares research and information to support sound decision making with key stakeholders 3.1.3 Applies problem-solving skills to create realistic solutions to nutrition problems or issues
3.2 Conducts research, evaluation and quality improvement processes using appropriate methods	3.2.1 Identifies and selects appropriate research methods to investigate food and nutrition problems 3.2.2 Applies ethical processes to research and evaluation 3.2.3 Collects, analyses and interprets qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation data 3.2.4 Accurately documents and disseminates research, quality improvement and evaluation findings

Domain 4. Collaborates with clients and stakeholders

Key Tasks/Elements	Observable and/or measurable actions
4.1 Communicates appropriately with individuals, groups, organisations and communities from various cultural, socio-economic, organisational and professional backgrounds	4.1.1 Practises in a manner that encompasses the needs, preferences and perspectives of others 4.1.2 Demonstrates empathy and establishes trust and rapport to build an effective relationship with client, carers, families, colleagues, community and other key stakeholders 4.1.3 Translates technical information into practical advice on food and eating and other relevant topics 4.1.4 Adapts and tailors communication appropriately for specific audiences 4.1.5 Communicates clearly and concisely to a range of audiences using a range of media
4.2 Builds capacity of and collaborates with others to improve nutrition and health outcomes	4.2.1 Shares information with and acts as a resource person for colleagues, community and other agencies 4.2.2 Identifies, builds relationships with and assists in implementing plans with key stakeholders who have the capacity to influence food intake and supply 4.2.3 Empowers individuals, groups and/or the broader community to improve their own health through engagement, facilitation, education and collaboration
4.3 Collaborates within and across teams effectively	4.3.1 Promotes a high standard of nutrition care, while respecting the goals and roles of clients and other professionals, key stakeholders or groups 4.3.2 Participates in collaborative decision making, shared responsibility, and shared vision within a team 4.3.3 Shares responsibility for team action, recognising the diverse roles and responsibilities other team members play 4.3.4 Guides and supports other team members and peers 4.3.5 Actively promotes the role of a Dietitian and the broader profession of nutrition and dietetics