Dietitians Registration Board
Standards of Proficiency for Dietitians

About this Document

CORU is a multi-profession regulator. The role of CORU is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

This document sets out the Dietitians Registration Board Standards of Proficiency for Dietitians.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

> Dietitians Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

> Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes: Information for Education Providers

> Programme Information Guidelines for Education and Training Providers

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Introduction

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (HSCP Act 2005) provides for the establishment of Registration Boards, to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. Entry onto to the register allows a person to use the title of that profession. This system of statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of professional services. The objective of the statutory registration system is to protect, guide and inform the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals are properly regulated and qualified for the job whether they work in the public or private sectors or are self-employed.

The objective of the Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

> The approval of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 48)

> Monitoring the continuing suitability of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 49).

Regulatory approval of a programme by a Registration Board is distinct from academic accreditation. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a qualification. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme associated with a given qualification consistently and effectively prepares graduates for entry into the register of that profession. To receive approval a programme must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Registration Board. There are two types of requirements:

> Criteria for education and training programmes

>> there are two sets of criteria; core and profession specific

>> the criteria specify the requirements for the design, organisation and management of a programme to ensure that it can consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency

> Standards of proficiency

  o there is one set of standards; profession specific

  o the standards of proficiency specify the threshold skills and abilities required for entry to the register

Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that individuals must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the registration board at the level of entry to practice. They are not standards for practice after entry to the register. Rather they offer a snapshot of the standards at entry to the register.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for *Dietitians* under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

3. Safety and Quality

4. Professional Development

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for entry to the register. There are two sets of criteria; core and profession specific. Together, the core and profession specific criteria form the Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed.

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet <u>all</u> of the Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet <u>all</u> of the required standards of proficiency.

A programme which meets the required criteria and standards of proficiency for entry to the register is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. Graduates possessing an approved qualification are eligible to apply for entry to the profession's register. The programme will then be subject to monitoring.

Failure to demonstrate that the programme meets the criteria for programmes and the standards of proficiency, either during approval or subsequent monitoring, will mean that the programme is not approved. Students graduating from a non-approved programme are not eligible to apply for entry to the profession's register.

Supporting CORU documentation

This document should be considered in conjunction with the following documentation:

> *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* for Dietitians

> *Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* for Dietitians - *Guidelines for Programme Providers*

> *Standards of Proficiency* for Dietitians

> *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics* for your profession

> *Approval and Monitoring Guide*

> *Programme Information Guidelines for Education/Training Providers*

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

Graduates will:

1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession

2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional

3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference

4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure

5. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process

6. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care

7. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession issued by the Registration Board

8. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups

9. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers

10. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given

11. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting

12. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse

13. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation

14. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing

15. Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/ interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained

16. Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity

17. Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made

18. Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate

19. Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources

20. Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

Graduates will:

1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user

2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs

3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns

4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-treatment, where appropriate

5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required

6. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation

7. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession

8. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements

9. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the boundaries of confidentiality

10. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice

11. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management

12. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals, treatments and interventions and be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users

13. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

14. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting

15. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

3. Safety and Quality

Graduates will:

1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs

2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment

3. Be able to determine the appropriate tests/assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests

4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process

5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals for individuals and groups.

6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments

7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care

8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user

9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or audit the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews

10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns

11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement

12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current legislation/guidelines

13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and guidelines

14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection prevention and control strategies

4. Professional Development

Graduates will:

1.   Be able to engage in and take responsibility for professional development

2.   Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice

3.   Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice

4.   Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately

5.   Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice

6.   Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the profession

2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant aspects of biological sciences, human development, social and behavioural sciences and other related sciences, in nutrition and dietetic practice.

3. Demonstrate a knowledge of health and wellbeing, disease, disorder and dysfunction and appropriate educational strategies in nutrition and dietetic practice.

4. Understand the role of the dietitian in supporting health and lifestyle behaviour change; be able to discuss the principles of health promotion and behaviour change

5. Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice

6. Demonstrate an understanding of pre-clinical sciences in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, including biochemistry, genetics, immunology, microbiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, physiology

7. Demonstrate an understanding of clinical sciences in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, including clinical chemistry, clinical haematology, clinical immunology, clinical microbiology

8. Know and understand the core elements of nutrition and dietetic practice, including nutritional science, food and nutrition in the human life-cycle, food consumption patterns, nutritional analysis and interpretation of food intake records, nutritional epidemiology, research methodology, public health nutrition, clinical medicine, including the medical and surgical management of common medical and surgical disorders, community dietetics, clinical dietetics, dietetic service management

9. Demonstrate an understanding of food legislation and food safety in the context of nutrition and dietetic practice, including food regulation and standards, food labelling, food safety, allergen regulations and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP).

10. Demonstrate knowledge of food preparation and knowledge of the principles of food service processes including recipe development, documentation and standardisation, menu ordering, manual and electronic systems, procurement, preparation, meal assembly, distribution and waste management.

11. Have knowledge of evidence-based national and international food and nutrition standards and guidelines, together with food composition databases. Be able to use this information to assess and develop recipes and menus, including those for therapeutic and modified texture diets, for specific individuals and population groups.

12. Be able to accurately assess nutritional needs and intakes of individuals, groups and populations, in a sensitive and detailed way using appropriate techniques and resources

13. Be able to advise on the provision of safe, nutritious, cost effective food appropriate for all and specific patient groups.

14. Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of practical, technical and clinical skills

15. Demonstrate ability to participate in or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research

16. Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision.

17. Be able to seek, support and promote learning opportunities among peers, students, themselves and others.

18. Be able to engage or lead in group education based on the needs of service users

19. Demonstrate ability to apply behaviour change theory and skills to support change of health and lifestyle behaviours as appropriate

20. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including translation of theory, concepts and methods to clinical/professional practice

21. Be able to identify and understand the impact of organisational, governmental community and societal structures, systems and culture on health and social care provision

22. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of nutrition and dietetics in the development and implementation of policy on health, food and nutrition, on a national and international level

23. Demonstrate an ability to develop a care plan using knowledge of pre-clinical sciences, clinical and food sciences, core nutrition and dietetic principles

24. Demonstrate ethical application of nutrition and dietetic practice including artificial nutrition support and consent, end of life care and advocacy

25. Demonstrate an understanding of how to use digital and social media in an ethical, confidential and professional manner

26. Be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5.

Glossary of Terms

Act	The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005(as amended)
Appeal	An application for reconsideration of a decision regarding approval of a programme.
Approval	The status granted to a programme that meets the criteria set by the Registration Board for approval of education and training programmes.
Approval process	The process that leads to a decision as to whether a programme meets the criteria set for approval of education and training programmes.
Assessment Team	An assessment team, selected from the Panel of Assessors, to carry out the approval process for an education and training programme.
Award	An award which is conferred or granted by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.
Biennial monitoring	A biennial process where a provider confirms that the approved programme continues to meet the criteria for approval.
Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics	This is a statement of the standards which registrants sign up to and agree to abide by in order to remain on the register.
Council	The Health and Social Care Professionals Council, established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended).
Criterion	A principle or standard that an education and training programme is judged by.
Curriculum	A structured plan to provide specific learning to support students' knowledge, skills, behaviours and associated learning experiences. The learning plan is generally organised as a sequence of modules. The curriculum includes the syllabus, teaching guides, an assessment plan and necessary learning resources.

Designated profession	A health or social care profession that is designated under Section 4(1) or Section 4(2) of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Dietician	This title is also protected by the Act and is interchangeable with the title Dietitian
Education Provider (Provider)	The institution that provides, organises and delivers an education and training programme.
Framework	The broad structure within which Registration Boards will operate in relation to the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes.
Food service institution	Food service institution refers to an environment where clients are nutritionally dependent.
Indicators	The means by which a provider shows how a programme satisfies the criteria for approval.
Mapping document	Template document to be completed by the education provider.
Major change	A change to a programme of study that significantly alters the way the programme meets the criteria for approval of education and training programmes and therefore how the students will attain the standards of proficiency. Not all changes to a programme are major changes.
Monitoring	The process of ensuring the continuing suitability of approved education and training programmes.
National Framework of Qualifications	The single, nationally and internationally accepted entity, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards.
Panel of Assessors	A panel appointed by a Registration Board comprising academics, practitioners, employers and service users.
Practice placement	A period of clinical or practical experience that forms part of an approved programme.
Practice educator	A person who is responsible for a student's education during the period of clinical or practical placement.

Practice education team	Persons who are responsible for a student's education during the period of clinical or practical placement. This includes the practice educator on site in the placement providers, including those dealing with practice placement education in dietetics.
Practice placement provider	The organisation that provides a period of clinical or practical experience for a student.
Profession specific proficiencies	Proficiencies added by a Registration Board related to a named profession.
Programme	The academic teaching, practice placements, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education provider, which together forms the programme for approval purposes.
Quality assurance procedures	Formal procedures that are in place in an institution for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training provided by the institution.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Refers to recognition of learning that has taken place prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.
Register	A register established and maintained under Section 36 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Registrant	In relation to a designated profession this means an individual whose name is currently on the register of members for that profession.
Registration Board	A board established under Section 26 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Self-study	The process whereby a provider of a programme examines and documents to a Registration Board how that programme meets the criteria for approval of programmes.
Service user	Anyone who uses or is affected by the services of registrants or students.
Standards of Proficiency	These are the standards required of graduates for the safe and effective practise of the professions regulated by the Council. They are the minimum standards necessary to protect the public.