Primary care role statement

This role statement was developed by members of the Private Sector Interest Group.

It lists the knowledge and skills of an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) working in the primary care (private practice) area.

Knowledge

- Small business management, including business planning, marketing and review.
- Accounting and taxation requirements.
- Legal obligations – including understanding of contract law, intellectual property law, Privacy Act requirements, professional indemnity insurance and document retention.
- Strong network of other specialist dietitians to enable appropriate referring on.
- Knowledge of relevant government programs such as the DVA system, Medicare Chronic Disease Management Plan items and NDIS, as well as knowledge of Private Health Funds.
- Generalist expertise in the dietary management of a broad range of health issues with the ability to identify significant nutritional issues and know when to refer on to a dietitian from their extensive network with greater expertise in a particular practice area.

Skills

- Small business management skills – including understanding basic accounting, business and financial planning, business development, project management and planning, time management and interpersonal skills, legal responsibilities and workplace health and safety.
- Marketing skills – including developing marketing plans targeting referral sources, social and print media for example, direct marketing to GPs/practice managers (letters, sponsored lunch presentations) and working with media.

- High level communication and negotiation skills with clients and their families, medical and allied health professionals, practice managers and other relevant groups including aged care facility staff, and health and fitness trainers.
- Evaluation skills – business evaluation including financial and marketing analysis.
- Ability to work autonomously while being able to undertake professional development and remain linked in with the wider dietetics and health community.
- Health coaching skills/motivational interviewing – such as dietetic health coaching or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, to enable long term behavioural change in clients. Further training may be required for successful implementation.

Activities entry level APDs would conduct

- Small business planning.
- General business management and administrative tasks that will enable a dietitian to set up their private practice e.g. business planning and management including accounting, taxation, compliance with relevant Medicare, DVA and NDIS requirements as well as Work Cover, and private health fund requirements.
- Marketing including implementing social media strategies and networking with referral sources.
- Preparation and review of client resources.
- Entry level nutritional assessment and management of clients across a broad range of nutritional issues, including skills to evaluate drug side effects and interactions, clinical signs and symptoms and recommendation of appropriate supplements where appropriate.

Activities APDs working at a higher level would conduct

- Running their own independent clinic/business i.e. larger scale business planning and management.
- Clinical consultations with higher level practice skills in other areas which may require extra training including but not limited to the non-diet approach, health coaching, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, sports nutrition, paediatrics, specific disease areas (bariatrics, renal, gastroenterology, food allergies/intolerances and others), therapeutic use and evaluation of nutraceuticals, and nutrigenetics.

Activities dietitians working in this area of practice do not usually undertake

- Exercise prescription (outside of general physical activity guidelines) unless having appropriate training, qualifications and/or certification.

- Diabetes Educator role unless having dual qualification and certification as a Credentialled Diabetes Educator.

For more, download the full role statement. The full statement includes a list of document references.

Get in touch

If you have questions about this role statement, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au

The role of an Accredited Practising Dietitian

Our role statements describe the skills and knowledge of an APD working in an area of practice.
Professional standards and scope of practice

Our professional standards and scope of work for dietitians working in Australia. Our standards ensure dietitians deliver high-quality dietetic services.