Public health and community nutrition role statement

Developed by members of the Public Health and Community Nutrition Interest Group.

Our role statement defines the role of an APD when working in the area of public health and community nutrition.

Knowledge

- Economic, environmental, social, cultural, political and behavioural factors that influence food supply, choice, access and consumption
- The purpose and application of the Dietary Guidelines for Australians, the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, the Nutrient Reference Values and other standards
- Local, state and federal data, policies and strategic documents relevant to the food system
- Application of a systems approach to identifying and addressing population food and nutrition issues
- Capacity building and community development frameworks and their integration into intervention planning and management
- Application of the core principles of health promotion, including the five action areas in the Ottawa Charter, and a commitment to addressing health inequities and disparities of access.

Skills

- Ability to collect, assess, and interpret relevant information on public health nutrition issues and translate it into effective interventions and practice

- Competence in population level programme planning, implementation and evaluation that is responsive and contributes to the public health nutrition evidence base
- Ability to engage key stakeholders across a range of sectors and establish and maintain collaborative partnerships for action on identified public health nutrition issues
- Interpersonal communication skills and the ability to adapt communication styles to a range of audiences, including professional and community stakeholders as well as funding bodies
- Written communication skills, ranging from professional report preparation to the development of health information that is inclusive and appropriate to target populations
- Ability to strategically and effectively advocate for identified public health nutrition issues.

Activities entry level APDs would conduct

- Application of primary prevention principles to public health nutrition interventions
- Assessment and monitoring of the determinants of nutrition and health and their impact on populations to identify priority issues and leverage points for intervention
- Delivery of evidence informed public health nutrition interventions at the population or community levels
- Facilitate skill development and training to build public health and community nutrition capacity in health and other sectors (for example, Nursing, Health Promotion, Aboriginal Health)
- Engage community and inter-sectoral stakeholders in collaborative action on nutrition issues.

Activities APDs working at a higher level would conduct

- Plan and manage the implementation and evaluation of a broad range of public health nutrition interventions, including the management of human and financial resources
- Provide leadership and supervision to personnel and tertiary students undertaking public health nutrition activities, including research and evaluation
- Provide public health nutrition leadership, implement capacity building initiatives, promote collaborative practice, and manage inter-sectoral partnerships
- Advocate for sustainable system changes, effective food and nutrition-related legislation and a sufficient public health and community nutrition workforce
- Assessment of the impact of public policy on nutrition and health, and leading strategic advocacy for policy improvement, as required.

Activities APDs working in this area do not usually undertake

• Dietitians working solely in public health or community nutrition roles do not usually undertake:

- Early intervention, tertiary prevention, chronic disease management activities or individual client consultation
- Clinically-based food service roles

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.
Seeing a dietitian in Australia

Dietitians treat a range of health conditions. They understand how nutrition affects the body and will give you expert nutrition and dietary advice.