



# New Zealand Professional Standards and Competencies for Dietitians

October 2017

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the national association of the dietetic profession with over 6000 members, and branches in each state and territory. DAA is a leader in nutrition and advocates for food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier nations. The Australian Dietetics Council appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the New Zealand Professional Standards and Competencies for Dietitians by the New Zealand Dietitians Board.

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## DAA interest in this consultation

DAA and the New Zealand Dietitians Board (NZDB) hold a Voluntary Relationship Charter for the Mutual Recognition of Dietetic Standards, the aim of which is to provide a simplified assessment of qualifications, skills and currency of practice. The basis of the Charter is agreement between DAA and NZDB that the standards of DAA credentialing and NZDB registration are sufficiently equivalent. DAA, particularly the Australian Dietetics Council is therefore interested in the revised Professional Standards and Competencies for Dietitians and are pleased to provide feedback as outlined below.

## Discussion

Overall, DAA agrees that the Professional Standards and Competencies document is logical and appropriate, and consistent with current approaches. The career-long focus of the Standards and Competencies is appropriate. This does, however, result in inclusion of some higher-level and complex competencies that may provide some challenges in dietetic student assessment which we recommend is considered in finalising the document. Specific comments have been included for consideration below.

*Specific comments*

### **Food, Nutrition, & Health Expertise**

- Are the *Food, Nutrition, & Health Expertise Standards & Competencies* easy to read and understand? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes, however the term “interdisciplinary” may cause some confusion in this context. In health guidelines and processes “interdisciplinary” frequently refers to team management across different academic disciplines. The definition is helpful, however, it may be worthwhile considering a different term.

- Do you generally agree with the proposed *Food, Nutrition, & Health Expertise Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes, they are all encompassing.

- Is there anything you think is missing from the *Food, Nutrition, & Health Expertise Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer and/or provide your thoughts

*Response:* No, this is comprehensive.

## Communication & Collaboration

- Are the *Communication & Collaboration Standards & Competencies* easy to read and understand? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes, however we suggest adding a definitions of “Tikanga” to clarify this competency for an international audience.

- Do you generally agree with the proposed *Communication & Collaboration Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes, these are well-detailed.

- Is there anything you think is missing from the *Communication & Collaboration Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer and/or provide your thoughts

*Response:* Consider adding a competency under 2.2 around use of technology for effective client-centred communication e.g. electronic applications (apps).

## Management & Leadership

- Are the *Management & Leadership Standards & Competencies* easy to read and understand? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes, these are straight-forward and easy to understand.

- Do you generally agree with the proposed *Management & Leadership Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes.

- Is there anything you think is missing from the *Management & Leadership Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer and/or provide your thoughts

*Response:* No, this is comprehensive.

## Professionalism

- Are the *Professionalism Standards & Competencies* easy to read and understand? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes, although it would be useful (if practical) to provide references to any binding legislation or statutory codes of particular relevance to Dietitians in NZ.

- Do you generally agree with the proposed *Professionalism Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes.

- Is there anything you think is missing from the *Professionalism Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer and/or provide your thoughts

*Response:* It may be worthwhile addressing complaint handling in 4.1 Practise safely and effectively

## Scholarship

- Are the *Scholarship Standards & Competencies* easy to read and understand? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes.

- Do you generally agree with the proposed *Scholarship Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes

Is there anything you think is missing from the *Scholarship Standards & Competencies*? Please provide a reason for your answer and/or provide your thoughts

*Response:* No, thank you.

## FINAL COMMENTS

Registered Dietitians hold increasingly diverse roles and are required to work flexibly in a variety of settings:

- Do the *Professional Standards & Competencies for Dietitians* reflect the changing workforce? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* Yes.

- Do the *Professional Standards & Competencies for Dietitians* reflect the changing needs of the New Zealand population? Please provide a reason for your answer

*Response:* N/A

- Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding the *Professional Standards & Competencies for Dietitians*?

*Response:* The purpose of the document describes the Professional Standards and Competencies as “aspirational” which implies that dietitians are not required to meet the Standards and Competencies but rather can “aspire” to them. We suggest that describing the intent of the document as forward-planning is appropriate, however the term “aspirational” may be misleading.