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.

Contact Person:
Position: Accreditation Manager
Organisation: Dietitians Association of Australia
Address: 1/8 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600
Telephone: 02 6189 1200
Email: accreditation@daa.asn.au
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.