

Dietitians

This document details suggested changes to the profession-specific standards for dietitians.

The PLG has considered the following information with specific reference to dietitians:

- (i) Registration Assessors' questionnaires (one comment made but about the generic standards, page 6)
- (ii) Professional bodies' questionnaires (response from the British Dietetic Association, pages 19 to 21)

This document incorporates the suggestions, made in relation to the dietitian standards (where possible) and makes recommendations to the PLG for changes, where appropriate.

The profession-specific standards are shown in italics. Where the PLG is required to make a decision in relation to a standard, this is shown in the grey shaded areas.

The generic standards incorporate the suggestions made elsewhere.

Expectations of a health professional

1a: Professional autonomy and accountability

Registrant dietitians must:

1a.1

be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession

- understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council
- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity and autonomy of every patient, client and user including their role in the **preventative** diagnostic and therapeutic process

- understand the ethical and legal implications of withholding or withdrawing feeding including food and fluids

Suggestion:

Suggestion is shown in the text on the previous page (BDA)

Decision:

The PLG is invited to agree the change to the standards.

1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner

1a.3 be able to maintain confidentiality and obtain informed consent

1a.4 be able to exercise a professional duty of care

1a.5: **be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

- be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem
- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
- **know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional**
- **recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions**

1a.6 recognise the need for effective self-management of workload **and resources** and be able to practise accordingly

1a.7 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise

- understand the importance of caring for themselves, including maintaining their health

1a.8 understand the need for career-long self-directed learning

1b: Professional relationships

Registrant dietitians must:

1b.1 know the professional and personal scope of their practice and be able to make referrals

1b.2 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, patients, clients and users, and their relatives and carers

- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
- understand the need to engage patients, clients, users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals

1b.3 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

1b.4 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, patients, clients, users, their relatives and carers

- 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
- understand how communication skills affect the assessment of patients, clients and users, and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical and learning disability
- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with patients, clients, users and others
- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
- understand the need to provide patients, clients and users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist patients whose first language is not English, wherever possible [omitted in error from existing dietitian standards]**
- recognise that relationships with patients, clients and users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility

1b.5 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the patient, client or user

- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of patients, clients and users

The skills required for the application of practice

2a: Identification and assessment of health and social care needs

Registrant dietitians must:

2a.1 be able to gather appropriate information

2a.2 be able to use appropriate assessment techniques

- be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment

- be able to choose, undertake and record the most appropriate method of dietary and nutritional assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment

2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange clinical **or scientific** investigations as appropriate

2a.4 be able to analyse and evaluate the information collected

*- be able to use nutritional analysis programmes to analyse food intake, records and recipes **and interpret the results***

Suggestion:

The change shown above is suggested by the BDA.

Decision:

The PLG is invited to agree the change to the standards.

2b: Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs

Registrant dietitians must:

2b.1 be able to use research, **clinical** reasoning and problem solving skills (and, in the case of clinical scientists, conduct fundamental research)

- recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice
 - be able to conduct evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures
 - be aware of methods commonly used in health and social care research
 - be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
 - be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice
- be able to use statistical, epidemiological and research skills to gather and interpret evidence in order to make reasoned conclusions and judgements with respect to dietetic practice in **disease prevention and management***

Suggestion:

The change shown above is suggested by the BDA to clarify the role of dietitians in prevention of disease, as well as in management and treatment.

Decision:

The PLG is invited to agree the change to the standards.

2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments
 - be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their profession
- be able to choose the most appropriate strategy to influence nutritional behaviour and choice*
- be able to undertake and explain dietetic treatment, having regard to current knowledge and evidence-based practice*
- be able to advise on safe procedures for food preparation and handling, food processing and menu planning, and the resulting impact on nutritional quality and menu planning*
- be able to interpret nutritional information including food labels which may have nutritional or clinical implications*

Suggestion:

The changes shown on the previous page were suggested by the BDA.

Decision:

The PLG is invited to agree the changes to the standards (professional bodies paper, page 20).

2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different client groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors
- *understand the need to be sensitive to social, economic and cultural factors that affect diet, lifestyle and health*
- *understand the significance and potential impact of non-dietary factors when helping individuals, **groups and communities** to make informed choices about their dietary treatment and health care.*
- *be able to assist individuals, groups **and communities** to undertake and to become committed to self-care activities including diet, **physical activity** and other lifestyle adjustments*
- *understand the need to demonstrate sensitivity to the factors which shape individual food choice and lifestyle which may impact on the individual's health and affect the interaction between client and dietitian*

Suggestion:

The changes shown above are suggested by the BDA.

Decision:

The PLG is invited to agree the changes to the standards.

2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely, skilfully and effectively

- understand the need to maintain the safety of both patients, clients and users, and those involved in their care

2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately

- *be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other [] information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines*
- *understand the need to use only accepted terminology (which includes abbreviations) in making [] records*

2c: Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions

Registrant dietitians must:

2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of patients, clients and users to their care
- be able to evaluate management plans against treatment milestones using recognised health outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the patient, client or user
- recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes
- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify, **inform** or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- understand that outcomes may not always conform to expectations but may still meet the needs of patients, clients or users

2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on clinical practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review

- *be able to evaluate nutritional and dietetic information critically, and to engage in the process of reflection in order to inform dietetic practice*
- *be able to adapt dietetic practice as a result of unexpected outcomes or further information gained during the dietetic **intervention***

Suggestion:

A suggested change is shown on the previous page (BDA). ‘Intervention’ replaces ‘interview’.

Decision:

The PLG is invited to agree the suggested change to the standards.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

3a:

Registrant dietitians must:

3a.1 know the key concepts of the biological, physical, social, psychological and clinical sciences which are relevant to their profession-specific practice

- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with a knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction
- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process
- recognise the role of other professions in health and social care
- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention
- *understand, in the context of dietetics, biochemistry, clinical medicine, diet therapy, food hygiene, food science, genetics, immunology, microbiology, nutrition, pathophysiology, pharmacology and physiology*
- *be aware of catering and administration*
- *understand sociology, social policy, psychology, public health and educational methods relevant to the dietetic management of individual clients or groups **or communities***
- *understand the methods commonly used in nutrition research and be able to evaluate research papers critically*

Suggestion:

The change shown above was suggested by the BDA.

Decision:

The PLG is invited to agree this change to the standards.

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3a.2 know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual, groups **or communities**

Suggestion:

- (i) Minor change shown above (BDA)
- (ii) use clinical reasoning to give practical, realistic, impartial and relevant nutrition and dietetic advice and information to an individual (BDA)

Decision:

- (i) The PLG is invited to agree the change to the standards
- (ii) The PLG is invited to conclude that clinical reasoning and the provision of advice are adequately covered by areas of the existing advice (for example, 1b.4, 2b.1, e.t.c).

The PLG are therefore invited to agree that no further changes or additional standards are necessary.

3a.3 understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

- be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
 - be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation
 - be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly
 - be able to establish safe environments for clinical practice, which minimise risks to patients, clients and users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control
 - understand and be able to apply appropriate moving and handling techniques
- be able to advise on safe procedures for food preparation*