

**Essential Competencies**  
**for**  
**Dietetic Practice**

***College of Dietitians of British Columbia***

***2006***

# ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES FOR DIETETIC PRACTICE

## DIMENSION 1: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

**Assumes responsibility and accountability in the provision of competent, safe, ethical, professional practice.**

**This dimension applies to all dietitians.**

### FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The competent dietitian demonstrates thorough knowledge of the following:

- Applicable legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines
- Code of ethics / conduct
- Scope of practice
- Human rights
- Conflict of interest
- Confidentiality
- Documentation guidelines
- Principles of information management
- Current technology

## ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### 1.0 Practices with professional integrity.

- 1.1 Practices in compliance with professional legislation and regulations.  
*May include: health profession acts, protection for person in care acts, personal directive acts, health information protection acts, freedom of information and protection of privacy acts*
- 1.2 Practices in compliance with professional standards, practice guidelines and codes.  
*May include: practice standards, codes of ethics, continuing competence programs*
- 1.3 Provides services within scope of practice and personal competence.
- 1.4 Refers individuals for consultation when issues are beyond scope of practice and competence.
- 1.5 Accepts personal responsibility and accountability for actions and decisions.

### 2.0 Respects the individuality and autonomy of others.

- 2.1 Respects individuals and their rights regardless of race, religious beliefs, color, gender, physical and/or mental disability, marital status, family status, economic status, education level, age, ancestry or sexual orientation.
- 2.2 Respects the dignity and privacy of individuals.
- 2.3 Obtains informed consent as required prior to providing services.
- 2.4 Provides services considering the best interests of the individual and their needs.

**3.0 Applies legal and ethical principles in managing information.**

- 3.1 Complies with legislation and established policies in managing information.  
*May include: freedom of information and protection of privacy acts, personal information protection acts, health information acts*
- 3.2 Protects the confidentiality and security of information throughout collection, storage, use, dissemination and destruction processes.
- 3.3 Protects integrity, reliability and authenticity of records.

**4.0 Applies information management principles and current technology in practice.**

- 4.1 Documents and maintains information in compliance with established guidelines.
- 4.2 Maintains accurate, clear, concise and timely documentation of professional services.
- 4.3 Uses current technology in practice.  
*May include: software, multimedia, web casts, e-mail, instant messaging, listservs, file transfers, videoconferencing, electronic charting*

## DIMENSION 2: COMMUNICATION

**Communicates and interacts effectively with individuals and groups in the provision of professional services.**

**This dimension applies to all dietitians.**

### FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The competent dietitian demonstrates thorough knowledge of the following:

- Effective verbal and written communication skills
- Public speaking skills
- Preparation of presentations
- Information gathering techniques and skills
- Education / learning theory and methods
- Learning styles
- Development of educational materials
- Principles of team work / team building / group dynamics
- Principles of conflict management
- Negotiation techniques
- Counseling theory and skills

### ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### 5.0 Communicates clearly and effectively.

- 5.1 Selects appropriate methods for communications.  
*May include: face-to-face, telephone, group meeting, letter / memo, e-mail*
- 5.2 Identifies and addresses barriers to communication.  
*May include: literacy issues, cultural issues, lack of understanding, interruptions, physical distractions, fear*
- 5.3 Adapts communication style to meet needs and level of understanding of individuals and groups.
- 5.4 Uses effective verbal communication skills.
- 5.5 Writes clearly, concisely and professionally.
- 5.6 Facilitates two way communications.
- 5.7 Uses active listening techniques.  
*May include: encouraging, clarifying, restating / paraphrasing, reflecting, summarizing, validating*
- 5.8 Interprets and responds to non-verbal communications.

#### 6.0 Uses effective information gathering skills.

- 6.1 Determines the purpose and objectives of information gathering activities.
- 6.2 Develops plans and gathers accurate, comprehensive, relevant information.  
*May include: client interviews, focus groups, meetings*
- 6.3 Builds trust and rapport with others to facilitate the information gathering process.
- 6.4 Establishes plans based on outcome of information gathering activities.

**7.0 Provides education to meet the learning needs of individuals and groups.**

- 7.1 Assesses the learning needs of individuals and groups.  
*May include: clients, care givers, students, dietetic interns, other professionals, staff*
- 7.2 Develops learning plans and supporting education resource materials to meet the learning needs of individuals and groups.
- 7.3 Adapts content and instruction style in the delivery of education to meet the needs of individuals and groups.
- 7.4 Evaluates effectiveness of education provided in achieving planned outcomes.

**8.0 Facilitates team work.**

- 8.1 Applies principles of collaboration and negotiation in team work.  
*Teams may include: clients, care givers, agencies, other professionals, staff*
- 8.2 Incorporates team members' knowledge, expertise and personal skills in team processes.
- 8.3 Collaborates with team members to determine goals.
- 8.4 Adapts personal approach to team members and situations.
- 8.5 Works with team members to identify and resolve conflicts.
- 8.6 Contributes to team decision making.
- 8.7 Assumes responsibility for completion of assigned tasks.

**9.0 Uses effective counseling / coaching skills.**

- 9.1 Determines goals of counseling / coaching sessions in collaboration with individuals.  
*May include: clients, care givers, students, dietetic interns, other professionals, staff*
- 9.2 Identifies and resolves barriers to achieving goals of counseling / coaching.
- 9.3 Engages individuals in anticipating and discussing issues relevant to their situation during counseling / coaching sessions.
- 9.4 Collaborates with individuals to develop plans to achieve goals of counseling / coaching.
- 9.5 Provides follow up to counseling / coaching sessions to determine if further action is required.

### **DIMENSION 3: COMPETENCE**

**Maintains competence in dietetic practice and the provision of professional services.**

**This dimension applies to all dietitians.**

#### **FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

The competent dietitian demonstrates thorough knowledge of the following:

- Continuing competence requirements
- Healthy eating and disease prevention
- Nutrition requirements throughout the life cycle
- Disease states and medical nutrition therapy
- Foods, eating patterns and food trends (Canadian, cultural, religious)
- Food theory and science
- Basic food preparation techniques
- Practice related calculations
- Food quality
- Food safety
- Research methodology / analysis
- Evidence based practice
- Problem solving process
- Decision making process
- Theory of managing change

### **ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

#### **10.0 Maintains professional competence.**

- 10.1 Reflects on and evaluates own current practice.
- 10.2 Assesses quality of services provided and identifies opportunities for improvement.
- 10.3 Recognizes limitations in practice qualifications and own level of competence.
- 10.4 Identifies professional competence goals.
- 10.5 Develops plans for meeting professional competence goals.
- 10.6 Engages in activities to gain new knowledge, skills and behaviors to meet professional competence goals.
- 10.7 Applies new knowledge, skills and behaviors to practice.

#### **11.0 Acts as a reliable source for current food and nutrition information.**

- 11.1 Applies food and nutrition related legislation, regulations, standards and guidelines to practice.  
*May include: Food & Drugs Act, Food & Drug Regulations, Nutrition Labeling Regulations, Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, Dietary Reference Intakes, Public Health Act, Food & Food Establishment Regulations, Occupational Health & Safety Regulations, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)*
- 11.2 Promotes healthy food choices and healthy eating behaviors.
- 11.3 Applies knowledge of nutrition requirements throughout the life cycle in practice.
- 11.4 Demonstrates knowledge of foods, cultural / religious foods, eating patterns and food trends in Canadian populations.
- 11.5 Plans menus and meal plans that conform to consumer needs, nutrition requirements and esthetic characteristics of foods.

11.6 Applies knowledge of food science and basic food preparation techniques in practice.

11.7 Completes accurate calculations related to practice.

*May include: imperial / metric conversions, nutrient requirements for clients, nutrient composition of foods, recipes, dietary intakes, food costs / selling prices, budget preparation*

11.8 Applies knowledge of quality food standards and food safety in practice.

11.9 Communicates the role, scope of practice and areas of expertise of the Registered Dietitian to others.

**12.0 Applies current research and evidence based practice findings into services provided.**

12.1 Evaluates current research / evidence based practice findings to determine the reliability and credibility of information.

12.2 Determines applicability of current research / evidence based practice findings to practice setting.

12.3 Applies research / evidence based practice findings to improve practice.

**13.0 Applies critical thinking skills in problem solving and decision making.**

13.1 Collects and analyzes relevant information related to an identified issue.

13.2 Develops and analyzes potential solutions to resolve the identified issue.

13.3 Implements the best solution to resolve the identified issue.

13.4 Evaluates the success of the solution and implements further action if required.

**14.0 Manages change in practice.**

14.1 Identifies the need for change and desired outcomes.

*May include change in: role, practice, work environment, organization*

14.2 Assesses readiness, implications and relevant issues related to change.

14.3 Develops and implements plans to achieve desired outcomes.

14.4 Evaluates and revises plans to achieve desired outcomes.

## DIMENSION 4: CLIENT CARE

Provides professional services to achieve the nutrition care goals of clients.

This dimension applies to all dietitians practicing in the area of client care.

### FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The competent dietitian demonstrates thorough knowledge of the following:

- Chemistry, biochemistry, biology, microbiology, human anatomy / physiology, metabolism, human nutrition and dietetics
- Medical terminology
- Client centered approach
- Nutrition screening
- Components of and techniques for conducting a comprehensive nutrition assessment
- Dietary Reference Intakes, Recommended Dietary Allowances
- Interpretation of laboratory data related to nutrition care
- Nutrient-drug interactions
- Development, implementation and evaluation of nutrition care plans
- Nutrition requirements throughout the life cycle
- Nutrition requirements / dietary guidelines for various physiological and disease states
- Adaptive feeding techniques and equipment
- Dietary supplements / formulas
- Nutrition and alternative therapies

### ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### 15.0 Uses a client centered approach to care.

- 15.1 Uses a variety of assessment strategies, individualized to client needs.  
*Clients may include: patients, residents, care givers*
- 15.2 Interviews clients to conduct needs assessments.
- 15.3 Considers the ability and resources of clients to execute the nutrition care plan.
- 15.4 Collaborates with clients / care givers in determining realistic nutrition goals and managing nutrition care.

#### 16.0 Contributes to client care through collaboration with inter-professional team.

- 16.1 Advocates on behalf of clients with the inter-professional team.
- 16.2 Coordinates and integrates care to ensure quality and continuity of care.
- 16.3 Refers clients to other members of the inter-professional team.

#### 17.0 Conducts comprehensive nutrition assessments.

- 17.1 Uses a structured system to identify clients at nutrition risk.
- 17.2 Determines psycho-social factors that may influence nutrition intake / status.
- 17.3 Conducts and analyzes client diet history.
- 17.4 Completes accurate analysis of food records.
- 17.5 Analyzes and compares food intake with nutrition requirements.

- 17.6 Assesses client nutrition status through physical observation and anthropometric measures.
- 17.7 Reviews and assesses relevant laboratory data.
- 17.8 Determines potential nutrient drug interactions.
- 17.9 Interprets findings of comprehensive nutrition assessment to identify normal, abnormal and deviant states of health.
- 17.10 Draws relevant conclusions from nutrition assessment data.
- 17.11 Prioritizes identified health needs in consultation with clients / care givers and inter-professional team.

**18.0 Develops, implements and evaluates nutrition care plans.**

- 18.1 Integrates assessment data in development of the nutrition care plan.
- 18.2 Considers co-morbidities in development of the nutrition care plan.
- 18.3 Consults with the inter-professional team in development of the nutrition care plan.
- 18.4 Identifies nutrition goals and develops nutrition care plan to achieve planned outcomes in collaboration with clients.
- 18.5 Formulates meal plans to achieve planned outcomes.
- 18.6 Determines appropriate formula and feeding route for clients.  
*May include: oral, enteral, parenteral*
- 18.7 Provides nutrition education to clients / care givers.
- 18.8 Coordinates implementation of nutrition care plan.
- 18.9 Implements strategies and supports for those unable to manage their own care.
- 18.10 Assesses client progress in achieving planned outcomes.
- 18.11 Evaluates effectiveness of nutrition care plan in achieving planned outcomes.

## DIMENSION 5: COMMUNITY AND POPULATION HEALTH

Provides professional services to promote health and prevent disease in communities and populations.

This dimension applies to all dietitians practicing in the area of community and population health.

### FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The competent dietitian demonstrates thorough knowledge of the following:

- Public health and health care system
- Public policy development
- Promotion of nutrition health and disease prevention
- Determinants of health
- Behavioral sciences, social sciences, biostatistics, epidemiology and environmental public health
- Socioeconomic, cultural and psychological influences on food intake
- Food security and food availability
- Conducting needs assessments
- Planning and development of community based food and nutrition programs
- Implementation and evaluation of community based food and nutrition programs

### ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### 19.0 Demonstrates understanding of public health system operation.

- 19.1 Applies understanding of public health and health care systems to the provision of community and population health services.
- 19.2 Identifies individual, public / private organizational and government roles and responsibilities within public health and health care systems.
- 19.3 Applies knowledge of food security / food insecurity in the provision of community and population health services.  
*May include: sustainability, social justice elements*
- 19.4 Applies principles of behavioral sciences, social sciences, biostatistics, epidemiology and environmental public health in the development of community and population health services.

#### 20.0 Promotes nutrition health and disease prevention in the community.

- 20.1 Advocates for nutrition programs and resources.
- 20.2 Participates in food and nutrition policy development and evaluation based on community and population health needs.
- 20.3 Participates in processes and policy development that affect food, food security and nutrition in communities and populations.
- 20.4 Collaborates with community partners and stakeholders in promoting community and population health.
- 20.5 Develops and implements strategies to promote healthy food choices and healthy eating behaviors.
- 20.6 Develops and implements strategies for disease prevention and management.
- 20.7 Consults with and provides nutrition information within the community.

*May include: individuals, groups, schools, agencies, outreach workers*

**21.0 Conducts assessments to determine needs for community based food and nutrition programs / services.**

21.1 Identifies determinants of health and their influence on community and population health status.

21.2 Assesses the nutrition health and functional status of communities and populations.

**22.0 Plans and develops community based food and nutrition programs / services.**

22.1 Determines goals for community based food and nutrition programs / services in collaboration with community partners.

*May include: individuals, groups, schools, agencies, outreach workers*

22.2 Identifies available resources for development of community based food and nutrition programs / services.

22.3 Selects strategies for addressing needs for community based food and nutrition programs / services.

**23.0 Implements and evaluates community based food and nutrition programs / services.**

23.1 Delivers nutrition programs / services to meet identified needs of communities and populations.

23.2 Develops and delivers professional communications.

*May include: presentations, articles for print media, press releases, public relations programs, communications plans, media interviews*

23.3 Identifies and implements strategies for reaching individuals and populations that do not access available community services.

23.4 Evaluates effectiveness and recommends improvements for community based food and nutrition programs / services.

## **DIMENSION 6: MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS**

**Applies organization management principles in the provision of professional services.**

**This dimension applies to all dietitians practicing in the area of organization management.**

### **FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

The competent dietitian demonstrates thorough knowledge of the following:

- Organization theory and management
- Planning (strategic, operational, business)
- Setting goals and objectives
- Policy development process
- Principles of human resource management
- Labor relations
- Contracts
- Performance management and evaluation
- Leadership skills
- Principles of financial management
- Spread sheet use
- Costing
- Risk management programs
- Quality improvement process
- Audit process

### **ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

#### **24.0 Applies principles of organization management into practice.**

24.1 Participates in the development and implementation of program / service planning.

24.2 Develops and delivers programs / services in compliance within organizational goals and objectives.

24.3 Allocates human and financial resources to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

#### **25.0 Develops and implements organizational policies / procedures.**

25.1 Consults with stakeholders and gathers information relevant to identified policy / procedure development needs.

25.2 Develops clear and concise policies / procedures.

25.3 Implements policies / procedures into organizational plans, program and services.

#### **26.0 Performs activities related to human resource management.**

26.1 Complies with government regulations, human resource policies and collective agreement in managing employees.

*May include: employment standards codes*

26.2 Determines staffing requirements and coordinates scheduling of staff to meet human resource needs.

26.3 Develops job descriptions and performance standards.

26.4 Develops and implements recruitment, selection and staff retention strategies to meet human resource needs.

26.5 Develops and implements programs to meet human resource needs.

*May include: orientation, training, employee assistance programs*

**27.0 Leads and directs others.**

- 27.1 Promotes an organizational learning culture.
- 27.2 Creates a culture of ethical behavior in the organization.
- 27.3 Directs and supervises personnel involved in the delivery of services.
- 27.4 Adapts leadership style to individuals and situations.
- 27.5 Identifies and facilitates resolution of conflict situations.
- 27.6 Delegates to others within their employment scope and level of competence.
- 27.7 Plans and conducts meetings to achieve desired outcomes.

**28.0 Develops and implements performance management and evaluation programs.**

- 28.1 Complies with human resource policies / procedures and collective agreements in managing the performance of others.  
*May include: employees, dietetic interns, students, volunteers, teams*
- 28.2 Conducts employee performance evaluations.
- 28.3 Manages the progressive disciplinary process according to established procedures.

**29.0 Integrates principles of financial management into practice.**

- 29.1 Develops reports based on collection of accurate financial / operational data.
- 29.2 Interprets operational data and financial statements to manage programs and services within budget.
- 29.3 Conducts cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit and cost-utility analysis to identify budget priorities.
- 29.4 Prepares budgets based on identified priorities.
- 29.5 Provides services within budget allocations.
- 29.6 Interprets and implements strategies to correct budget variances.

**30.0 Incorporates quality improvement cycle into services provided.**

- 30.1 Assesses quality of services provided and identifies opportunities for improvement.  
*May include: quality improvement audits, client / customer satisfaction surveys*
- 30.2 Establishes goals for improving quality of services provided.
- 30.3 Develops and implements quality improvement plans.
- 30.4 Evaluates quality improvement data and implements continuous quality improvement planning.

**31.0 Incorporates risk management strategies into practice.**

31.1 Identifies and assesses potential risks that may impact the delivery of safe, effective service.

*May include: disaster, pandemic, contingency, strike / lock out, threat, supply / service disruptions*

31.2 Develops and implements plans for managing identified risks.

31.3 Evaluates and recommends improvements to risk management plans.

## DIMENSION 7: MANAGEMENT OF FOODSERVICE SYSTEMS

Applies principles of foodservice systems management in the provision of safe, nutritious food.

This dimension applies to all dietitians practicing in the area of foodservice management.

### FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The competent dietitian demonstrates thorough knowledge of the following:

- Foods, eating patterns and food trends (Canadian, cultural, religious)
- Principles of menu planning
- Principles of the purchasing process
- Inventory management
- Food theory
- Sensory evaluation of food
- Food grades and standards
- Food science
- Food technology
- Biotechnology
- Recipe terminology and food preparation techniques
- Food production systems
- Food distribution systems
- Foodservice equipment
- Principles of facility design and workflow
- Principles of workplace safety and sanitation

### ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### 32.0 Applies principles of menu planning.

32.1 Plans and implements master menus that conform to consumer needs, nutrition requirements, esthetic characteristics of foods, available equipment, staff skill level and budget restrictions.

32.2 Evaluates menus based on established criteria.

#### 33.0 Applies principles of managing the purchasing process.

33.1 Evaluates products based on established criteria for customer acceptance, nutrition content, cost and quality.

33.2 Coordinates the purchasing, receiving, storage and issuing of food, beverages, small wares and equipment.

#### 34.0 Manages the production and distribution / service of quantity and quality food products.

34.1 Manages the production of products that meet established quality standards.  
*May include: standardized recipes, formulas, special diet products*

34.2 Manages food distribution and service ensuring accuracy, quality and portion control.

#### 35.0 Coordinates facility design and workflow.

35.1 Analyzes and implements strategies for efficient workflow in facility layout and design.

35.2 Applies principles of ergonomics to work station design.

35.3 Develops and implements work simplification and productivity strategies.

**36.0 Applies principles of managing workplace safety and sanitation.**

36.1 Develops and implements food safety and sanitation programs in compliance with government regulations.

36.2 Develops and implements employee safety / accident prevention programs in compliance with government regulations.