

Competency Development for Recommended Future Education Model Degree Programs

ACEND is working with consultant, Leanne Worsfold (<http://icomconsulting.com/>), to help develop the competencies for the associate's, bachelor's and master's degree programs in the recommended future education model. Ms. Worsfold, is considered an expert in competency development and has worked with many health professions in the US and Canada helping them develop competencies. A particular strength of Ms. Worsfold's approach is her ability to be open minded and work with each group in a unique way, yet bring her expertise from across multiple health professions. She understands current dietetics practice because of her recent work with the Commission on Dietetic Registration on development of their professional development competencies, and has shown her ability to work in a separate and independent way with ACEND focusing on future practice and the competencies needed for entry level practice by graduates at multiple degree levels.

The first step in the competency development process has included work by a group of 15 individuals termed **subject matter experts**. These individuals were selected by the ACEND Standards Committee from a group of more than 100 individuals who had either responded to ACEND's call in 2014 for individuals interested in being involved in ACEND's standards development work or were recommended by stakeholders. These 15 individuals include educators and practitioners all of whom are RDNS or NDTRs who work or have worked in a broad spectrum of practice areas (inpatient and outpatient clinical nutrition, foodservice management, school foodservice, business, communication, private practice, public health, college teaching, research, quality management, and healthcare administration). This group began working together in June to draft competencies expected of graduates of the associate's, bachelor's, and master's level programs in the future education model. This work is expected to be finished in fall 2015.

Draft competencies will go through several rounds of review and will be revised based on stakeholder feedback at every round. The first review will be by a group of 100+ individuals ACEND is terming **first line reviewers**. These individuals either volunteered to assist with ACEND's standards development work or were recommended by stakeholders. They will represent a broad spectrum of practice and include educators and practitioners. The first line reviewers will work with consultant Worsfold to review the draft competencies and offer suggested changes to the competencies. ACEND expects this review to be completed by late 2015/early 2016.

These draft competencies will go through a **validation study** with input from a sample of 5,000+ nutrition and dietetics practitioners, educators and employers. Based on their input, additional changes will be made to the draft competency statements. This work should be finished in spring 2016.

The resulting competency statements will then be released to 95,000+ stakeholders for two or more rounds of **public comment** in fall 2016 and additional revisions made, if needed.

The final competencies will be included in the new education model associate's, bachelor's and master's degree standards that are anticipated to be **released for voluntary adoption** by pilot programs in 2017. ACEND hopes to have pilot programs admitting students in 2018. ACEND will **collect and analyze** data from programs and graduates (likely 4 – 6 years after program adoption) before making a decision about implementation of the recommended future model for all programs. If a decision is made to implement the recommended future model for all programs, **sufficient time** (likely 10 years or more) would be given for programs to make the changes needed.

ACEND appreciates the work of all of the volunteers who are assisting in this work and encourages all stakeholders to provide input during the comment periods. **Please contact ACEND to help answer any questions** (acend@eatright.org; 312-899-4872). Future editions of the *ACEND Standards Update* will include questions asked and an ACEND response. This *Update* and additional information about the standards process are available at: www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards.