

## DEFINITION AND CRITERIA FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE

### Advanced Practice

**Definition:** The practitioner demonstrates a high level of skills, knowledge and behaviors. The individual exhibits a set of characteristics that include leadership and vision and demonstrates effectiveness in planning, evaluating and communicating targeted outcomes.

**Rationale:** The term *advanced practice* is used after a careful review of the Academy's Standards of Practice (SOP) and Standards of Professional Performance (SOPP) in the various focus areas of nutrition and dietetics practice and the literature for other professions. In addition, the Advanced Practice Clinical Nutrition Certification requirements from CDR were reviewed.

### Criteria for Advanced Practice

#### 1) **Education** (minimum)

- Graduate degree from a US regionally accredited institution.
- Individuals with professional degrees (e.g., M.D., J.D., D.D.S., D.O.) may also qualify as advanced practice.

#### 2) **Experience**

- Possess the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) credential for at least 4 calendar years (based on CDR's Advanced Practice Clinical Nutrition Certification).
- Documents the continuation of advanced practice and/or management in a certain focus or generalized area of nutrition and dietetics. For example, the Professional Development Portfolio can be used to document continuing education at the advanced practice level.
- Ethics guides the practitioner's decision-making process.

#### 3) **Credentials**

- Possesses an advanced practice credential, if available. For instance, the following credentials are currently available to the RDN: Advanced Practice Clinical Nutrition Certification (AP-RDN) offered through CDR and Board Certified in Advanced Diabetes Management (BC-ADM)-jointly sponsored by the American Association of Diabetes Educators and the American Nurse Credentialing Center.
- CDR has created the advanced practice credential in clinical nutrition. The requirements for this credential include:
  - Be an RDN for four calendar years.<sup>1</sup>
  - Documents 8,000 hours of clinical nutrition practice within the past 15 years; 800 of the required hours must be within the past 2 years.<sup>1</sup>
  - A pathway does exist for RDNs without a graduate degree in the advanced practice clinical nutrition certification.<sup>1</sup>

4) Based on the results of CDR's 2013 Advanced-Level Clinical Practice Audit <sup>2</sup>, which provide the basis for CDR's Advanced Level Clinical Practice Certification, 18 task descriptions most associated with Advanced Level Practice RDNs, were identified.<sup>2</sup> Removing the specificity to clinical nutrition, these task descriptions could possibly be applied to advanced practice in other areas of nutrition and dietetics. To provide examples of the types of tasks performed by an advanced practice RDN, an adaptation of CDR's task descriptions follow:

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### Support Nutrition Care

- Lead an interdisciplinary team in designing nutrition related services, programs or protocols.
- Develop programs or systems of care (e.g., support groups, educational programs) that address needs of target populations.

### Manage Systems of Nutrition Care

- Develop standards (e.g., protocols, guidelines, practice tools).
- Direct the implementation of continuous quality improvement programs.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of continuous quality improvement programs.
- Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of policies and procedures.
- Select available technologies (hardware and software) to improve outcomes.
- Analyze the safety aspects of practices and procedures.
- Evaluate new tools and techniques for delivering services.
- Develop and implement new tools and techniques for delivering services.
- Ensure compliance with local, state, and national rules and regulations.

### Conduct research and Design/Develop Systems of Nutrition Care

- Design and develop continuous quality improvement programs.
- Analyze data from research.
- Communicate research findings.
- Evaluate published research to determine applicability to setting.
- Utilize systematic methods to obtain published evidence to answer practice questions and inform decisions.
- Develop strategic plans for an organization/institution.
- Develop operational plans for an organization/institution.

**5) Other Characteristics/ Attributes** that reflect advanced practice include the skills, knowledge and/or behaviors exhibited and demonstrated by the advance practice RDN and evidence of an ongoing development and willingness to explore/experience new opportunities or situations, such as those listed below. These characteristics might be measured by examination, portfolio, etc.

- Prioritizes order, rank and mode of required communications (e.g., physician rounds, legislative decision-makers)
- Approaches new opportunities/situations with flexibility and adaptability
- Demonstrates personal and organizational leadership
- Functions with a high degree of autonomy
- Recognizes sense of self and knows own limitations
- Recognized by others for expertise
- Makes decisions using benefit/risk evaluation
- Exposes self to new situations and ideas to experience, learn and apply to practice
- Strive to improve skill base by continuously moving out of personal comfort zone
- Demonstrates effectiveness/efficiency; problem solving; inspires confidence in others
- Demonstrates emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996)
- Influences decision-makers related to policy, resources and services (e.g., elected and appointed government officials, university president, medical center CEO)

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- Leads consensus panels and coalitions
  - Maintains local/state/national/international role contacts and networks
  - Directs strategic planning efforts
  - Designs innovative programs, services or curricula
  - Provides expert opinion or expert testimony; Opinion is sought out for their expertise/skills by other leaders/experts
  - Plans and delivers invited presentations for national meetings
  - Conducts benchmarks for research or outcomes studies
  - Reviews proposal, grants, refereed journal articles, publications, and books
  - Creates innovations that impact the profession
  - Seeks and implements grants and external funding
  - Identifies and manages revenue streams and funding
  - Develops IRB proposals
  - Publishes in peer reviewed publications
  - Develops guides to practice used by other practitioners
  - Interprets and translates the literature effectively into practice application
  - Uses data effectively to manipulate or garner the resources to address issues affecting the organization as a whole.
  - Applies skills in consultation with other professional fields (e.g., lawyer)
  - Formulates and communicates clear visions
  - Works effectively internally and externally with all levels (e.g., chairs of departments, president of organization, other organizations, peers in other organizations)
  - Mentors peers or professionals in complex issues, procedures and practices
  - Contributes to evidence analysis process to affect practice
  - Identifies and creates new practice opportunities
  - Maintains and creates networks with wider number of disciplines
  - Creates and undertakes expanded and new practice roles and responsibilities
  - Uses global resources to reach effective outcomes
  - Increase revenues by creating new programs, services to benefit the organization
  - Teaches advanced practice professionals (e.g., physicians, nurses)
  - Demonstrates high level decision-making with a focus on delivering outcomes
  - Maintains connection with key research institutions (e.g., NIH, USDA); viewed as a major contributor within the research community
  - Uses time for reflection (regarding progress, issues, goals, plans, achievements)
  - Identifies new innovative public policy initiatives in the area of food and nutrition
  - Identified as a major collaborator with other organizations in order to position RDNs or to facilitate the work of the RDN (e.g., NWA, AADE, USBC).
- 6) Demonstrated examples can be found in scenarios #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #9, and #10 in the Guide to Using the Nutrition and Dietetics Career Development Scenarios.

<sup>1</sup> Brody RA et al. Developing an Advanced Practice Credential for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists in Clinical Nutrition Practice. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. 2015; 115(4): 619-623.

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2 Mueller C et al. Report from the Advanced-Level Clinical Practice Audit Task Force of the Commission on Dietetic Registration: Results of the 2013 Advanced-Level Clinical Practice Audit. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2015; 115(4): 624-634.