

Definition for Focus Area of Nutrition and Dietetics Practice

Definition and Criteria for Specialist

Focus Area of Nutrition and Dietetics Practice

Definition: Defined area of nutrition and dietetics practice that requires focused knowledge, skills, and experience.

Rationale: The term *focus area* is adopted based on feedback from members to the Council and relates to how a practitioner specializes in a specific area of practice (i.e., diabetes, community health).

Specialist

Definition: A practitioner who demonstrates a minimum of the proficient level of knowledge, skills and experience in a focus area of dietetics practice by the attainment of a credential.

Rationale: The term *specialist* requires a credential and is defined by the Academy Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care (SOP) and Standards of Professional Performance (SOPP) or other criteria established for a focus area of practice. A specialist performs at the proficient level.

Criteria for Specialist

1. Education

- Specialized education and training beyond the baccalaureate degree (i.e., residency program, on-job training, advanced degree).
- Education and training are beyond being proficient as defined by the Dietetics Career Development Guide. Job performance skills are obtained.

2. Experience

- Beyond entry-level (3 years) with defined experiences and skills for a focus area of practice. Note: Eligibility requirements for CDR specialist certification are listed below.
- Documents the continuation of practice and/or management in a focus area.
- Seeks out professional development experiences in the focus area of practice.
- Ethics guides the practitioner's decision-making process.

3. Credentials currently available for the specialist.

Eligibility requirements for specialist certification include maintenance of RDN status with CDR, for a minimum of two years from original examination date, and documented practice experience as an RDN in the focus area within the past five years.

CDR Board Certified Specialist credentials currently available:

- Pediatric
- Renal
- Sports Dietetics
- Oncology
- Gerontology

Non-CDR Credential for RDN Specialist currently available (**this is not an all inclusive list**):

- Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE)-National Certification Board for Diabetes Educators
- Certified Eating Disorders Registered Dietitian (CEDRD)- International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals Foundation
- Certified Nutrition Support Specialist (CNSC)-National Board for Nutrition Support Certification

Approved 7/13/15

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- Registered Environmental Health Specialist/ Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS)- National Environmental Health Association
 - Certified Professional-Food Safety (CP-FS)-National Environmental Health Association
 - International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)-International Board for Lactation Consultant Examiners
 - Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ)-Healthcare Quality Certification Board
 - Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES)-National Commission for Health Education Certification
 - Certified in Public Health (CPH)- National Board of Public Health Examiners certification
4. **Characteristics** include the skills, knowledge and/or behaviors that are exhibited and demonstrated by the specialist
- Incorporates evidence-based practice in a focus area of dietetics practice and is involved in research
 - Completes continuing education opportunities each year in the focus area of practice
 - Consistently reads and applies journal articles related to the focus area of practice
 - Participates in advocacy initiatives pertaining to the focus area of practice
 - Serves as a mentor and/or resource to other practitioners
 - Actively participates in specialized practice groups (DPGs etc) related to the focus area of practice
 - Actively participates in self-study and demonstrates heightened interest in learning
 - Actively participates in a formal work team or research team and leads as needed
 - Known as the “go to person” for non-routine questions in focus area of dietetics practice
5. **Demonstrated examples** of experiences and learning activities of a specialist
- Authors articles in the focus area for peer-reviewed scientific publications
 - Authors chapters, books, or textbooks in the focus area
 - Presents on topics in the focus area at regional, state, national or international conferences
 - Co-investigator of research projects in the focus area
 - Serves in management position(s) in the focus area
 - Translates complex ideas/concepts inherent to the focus area for students, peers, and other professionals
 - Uses evidence-based information and best practices in communicating a focus area of dietetics practice, e.g., DPG and other professional newsletters, peer journal club activities, and all forms of media
 - Proactively engages in communication and interactions with the media on issues related to the focus area
 - Additional examples can be found in scenarios 1 and 3 in the Guide to Using the Nutrition and Dietetics Career Development Scenarios.

Approved 7/13/15