**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

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Definition and Criteria for Specialist

- 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.

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