The role of DAA in maintaining the quality of nutrition and dietetic competencies in promoting healthy lifestyles through nutrition in Australia

Associate Professor Eleanor Beck
Change your background colour in the layout tab above.
**DAA Vision**

Leadership in dietetics, food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier nations.

As dietitians/nutritionists we are in a unique position to assist at every level of government, community and society to influence the nutritional health of individuals, communities and populations.


**Pillars**

In order to achieve our Mission, DAA will:

- Champion excellence in practice
- Increase opportunities for members
- Advocate to influence external policy
  Collaborate on and influence international dietetic and nutrition issues
- Maintain and enhance good governance and management

How does this enhance nutrition for the public?
How do dietitians/nutritionists enhance public health?

Domains of practice

Individual Patient Care
Public Health and Community Practice
Influencing Government Policy
Food Service Management

All underpinned by research and evidence-based practice

Teaching nutrition professionals to respond to change – strong education, essential for progress
DAA Roles in competency development and recognition

Dietetics in Australia is a self-regulating profession

- Accreditation of Dietetic Education programs in Australia
- Recognition of Overseas Qualifications (education)
- Education – including; education standards, review of competency standards
- Services – liaison with the Board such that the Australian Dietetics Council is independent of the Board
DAA’s role in education programs

• DAA has defined national competency standards for entry-level dietitians as prerequisites for membership, and accredits programs based on these.

• DAA reviews the National Competency Standards on an ongoing basis to ensure continued relevance to the profession and community.

• DAA supports universities in developing their strengths to complement the graduates’ achievement of the competency standards for entry-level dietetics.
What are competency standards?

• Importantly, assessment of competency takes the participant’s knowledge and attitudes into account but requires actual desirable performance of the competency as the primary source of evidence (Norton 1987).

• While knowledge-based assessments can certainly be used in competency based teaching to measure mastery of information, the primary focus is on measuring mastery of skills. A competent clinician is one who is able to perform a clinical skill to a satisfactory standard (Edwards and Rosenfeld 2006; Harris, Snell et al. 2010).
Competency Standards

- Competency standards define what dietitians do at entry level
- Competency framework should describe the areas that dietitians will work on
- May include a framework for advanced practice
But how do we ensure we are reactive to change?

New competency standards define what are the skills dietitians/nutritionists need to improve the health of individuals, groups and populations throughout their careers?

Apply these skills in a variety of settings
Important in Indonesia – important for PERSAGI

How do you ensure that Dietitians/Nutritionists in Indonesia are equipped to deal with the dual problems of undernutrition and potential overnutrition in some groups?

*Must be reactive to change – anticipate; ask research questions; understand epidemiology; understand individual care and translation to practice*
New competency standards

Competency standards need to reflect professional evidence-based practice, critical thinking and an ability to provide a collaborative approach to influence the health of individuals, communities and populations.

The competency is the ability to apply a skill regardless of the setting.
Methodology

- Employment of a project leader, management team and reference group.
- Dr Claire Palermo (project leader), Prof Sandra Capra, Prof Susan Ash, Assoc Prof Eleanor Beck, Assoc Prof Jane Conway, Dr Janeane Dart
- Interviews with recent graduates, employers, dietitians from various fields of practice.
- Interviews were transcribed and major themes reviewed – including “what is missing from current standards”.
- Draft standards after “expert review”
Methodology cont’d

• Survey of dietetics experts – including academics and practising professionals
• Delphi methodology – looking for agreement on what should and should not be included from draft
• Currently have consensus – draft standards to the Australian Dietetic Council, then DAA Board
New competencies 2015

- Skills to enable dietitian/nutritionists to be professionals.
- Apply critical thinking to all areas of practice
- Advocate for individuals, communities and populations
- Always evidence-based medicine
- Collaborative approach to practice
## 2009 Competency Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation Competencies</th>
<th>Core Competencies</th>
<th>Critical Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying knowledge</td>
<td>Nutrition Communication</td>
<td>Individual case management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, education and professional opinion to individuals, groups and communities</td>
<td>Manages nutrition care for individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sufficient to ensure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>Collection, analysis and assessment of nutrition/health data</td>
<td>Community, Public Health Nutrition and Advocacy for Food Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrates scientific</td>
<td>Collects, organises and assesses data relating to the nutritional status of individuals and groups</td>
<td>Plans, implements and evaluates programs with communities as part of a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information and research into practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 8</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unit 6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Food Service Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Manages component of food service to provide safe and nutritious food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principles to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provision of nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services, programs and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit 6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advocacy, innovation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a professional, ethical and entrepreneurial approach, advocating for excellence in nutrition and dietetics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Domain 3. Applies critical thinking and integrates evidence into practice

| Uses best available evidence to inform practice | 1. Adopts a questioning and critical approach in all aspects of practice  
2. Gathers, critiques, uses and shares research and information to support sound decision making with relevant stakeholders  
3. Applies problem solving skills to create realistic solutions to nutrition problems or issues |
| Conducts research, evaluation and quality improvement processes using appropriate methods | 1. Identifies and selects appropriate research methods to investigate food and nutrition problems  
2. Applies ethical processes to research and evaluation  
3. Collects, analyses and interprets qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation data  
4. Accurately documents and disseminates research, quality improvement and evaluation findings |
## Domain 3. Applies critical thinking and integrates evidence into practice

| Uses best available evidence to inform practice | 1. Adopts a questioning and critical approach in all aspects of practice  
2. Gathers, critiques, uses and shares research and information to support sound decision making with relevant stakeholders  
3. Applies problem solving skills to create realistic solutions nutrition problems or issues |
| Conducts research, evaluation and quality improvement processes using appropriate methods | 1. Identifies and selects appropriate research methods to investigate food and nutrition problems  
2. Applies ethical processes to research and evaluation  
3. Collects, analyses and interprets qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation data  
4. Accurately documents and disseminates research, quality improvement and evaluation findings |
Ensuring Students Meet Standards

• Minimum 4-year degree after 13 years of school
• Many dietitians have 3 year degree + Masters qualification as “entry-level”
• All degrees have biosciences including biochemistry and physiology. Minimum 50% biosciences in first two years of degree. We look for at least 25% second year biochemistry and 25% physiology – must include laboratory practicals
• Higher degree research studies mostly are PhDs as dietetics qualification includes basic research curriculum to allow direct entry to PhD.
# Year 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>BND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEDI 110 Human Growth, Nutrition and Exercise</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDI 111 Introduction to Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC101 Introduction to Behavioural Science or SOC103 Sociology</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM101 Chemistry 1A</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDI 150 Fundamental Concepts in Food &amp; Nutrition</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDI 112 Introduction to Anatomy &amp; Physiology II</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL103 Molecules, Cells &amp; Organisms</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM102 Chemistry 1B</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Year 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>BND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHS 231 Health Promotion</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDI 211 Control Mechanisms Physiology</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL213 Principles of Biochemistry</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM215 Food Chemistry</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL214 Biochemistry of Energy &amp; Metabolism</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDI 250 Measurement and Assessment of Diet and Activity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT251 Fundamentals of Biostatistics</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition&amp;Food Innovation/pathophysiology/psychology/Indig Aust</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Year 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>BND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHS 353 Community and Public Health Nutrition</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHS 351 Nutrients and Metabolism</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIET450 Dietetics 1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIET451 Dietetics 2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIET452 Communication in Healthcare Practice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIET456 Foodservice and Dietetic Management</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Year 4 – only for BND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>BND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIET 460 Dietetics Research Practice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Other studies?
- After BSc Nutrition/BND
UOW 4th year Research/Practice

• Introduction
• Thesis design and methods
• Study 1: reflections on one domain of practice
• Study 2: reflections on another domain of practice
• Study 3: report on major project incorporating Systematic Literature Review (includes 24 cp project)
• Conclusions

• Equipping graduates to always apply critical thinking and reflective practice to all areas of work.
Example: Malnutrition in practice

• Dietitians deal with malnutrition, what tools do they use to monitor and evaluate.
• Consider the issue/concept of malnutrition in a number of practice contexts and conduct a study related to preventing hospital readmission in malnourished elderly
• Study 1: From food service placement – what might be the implications for managing malnutrition in a FS system?
• Study 2: From community nutrition placement – is malnutrition an issue in the community context? Does malnutrition only relate to hospitals?
• Study 3: Intervention of home visits to elderly patients who scored SGA B or C on hospital admission.
• Conclusions, reflections, and implications/recommendations for practice
How does DAA enforce competency standards?
Accreditation Outline

- Philosophy and goals of the program
- Resources and staffing
- Program management and evaluation
- Accountability to students
- Curriculum
- Professional practice program
- Includes a site visit
**Professional Placement**

- Experience in an employment setting is a recognised element of the development of professional competency.
- Builds on theory taught in the academic program.
- Students can achieve competency in a variety of settings and innovation is encouraged.
- Placement activities need to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate competence in the curriculum’s core activities.
- Some variety in settings is encouraged for the different placements.
Does the program meet the DAA expectations of professional practice placements?

Evidence guideline

- Description of professional placement organisation and structure. It is important to show details of all the placements (placement type and name of facility, bed size if hospital, number and APD status of supervisors at each facility) and the number of students that are at each placement at any one time.
How will the university maintain its coordinating and management role for placement activities?

What arrangements are planned for regular, and as required, communications with placement supervisors?

Evidence guideline
Documented arrangements, contracts
Use of placement coordinators/clinical educators
May include phone calls, visits, meetings pertaining to individuals and to the cohort of students.
How will the students’ skill development be assessed while on placement?

Evidence guideline
Documented assessment and communication processes. Include copies of all relevant assessment forms. How were these assessment forms developed?
**Assessment**

- Most universities now use an assessment portfolio
- Online versions which students and assessors can access
- Students responsible for producing all the evidence of how they meet the competency standards
- Onsite supervisors verify and add comments
- University confirms suitable responses/evidence
How will students be involved in evaluating the practice program?

Evidence guideline

It is recommended that regular meetings of students and supervisors occur and that at the end of placement students have the opportunity for comment on placement and supervision.
Assessing overseas graduates

1. Desktop review of qualifications (must contain biosciences, biochemistry, physiology, placement of at least 20 weeks; need suitable IELTS; currency of practice; eligibility to practice in country of origin)
2. Multiple Choice Question Exam
3. Oral exam – counselling session

Must pass each phase before move onto the next phase.

Assesses same competency standards as Australian graduates
Achieving better health

- Empower our graduates to be life-long learners
- To always question the science behind the messages
- To have skills to investigate and research
- Translation of theory to practice
Professional Associations

• Set standards for professional practice – including competency standards which change over time to reflect new practice, new thinking and new needs of the community.

• Ensure Universities have the human skills and the resources to educate dietitians – all students meet the competency standards on graduation.

• Foster research in Universities and in practice to ensure dietitians/nutritionists are at the cutting edge of nutrition research and practice.

• Advocate for individual dietitians as well as with government on policy direction.
Leadership in dietetics, food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier nations.
OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

TOP 2% OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD
- 276th in the world - QS World University Rankings 2013/2014
- 298th in the world - Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2013/2014
- 352nd in the world - Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2013
- 314th in the world for research quality - 2014 Leiden Ranking

ONE OF AUSTRALIA’S BEST MODERN UNIVERSITIES
- 22nd in the world - QS Top 50 Under 50 Rankings 2014
- 33rd in the world - Times Higher Education Top 100 Under 50 Rankings 2014

GLOBALLY RATED A FIVE-STAR UNIVERSITY
- QS World University Rankings 2012/2013
- Australian Good Universities Guide 2014