



Policy on Determining Currency¹ Hours for Dietitians in Ontario

Effective Date

1.1 This policy takes effect on June 16, 2022.

Preamble

The purpose of the College's monitoring of members practising fewer than 500 hours in three years² is:

- To meet statutory obligations under the College's Registration Regulation ([O. Reg. 593/94](#)) under the [Dietetics Act, 1991](#)³, S.O. 1991, c.26, Part 1: Registration, Section 5 of the College of Dietitians of Ontario (the "College") which requires:

"5. (1) By the end of the third year following the issuance of a certificate of registration and in every subsequent year, every member shall provide evidence satisfactory to the Registrar that the member has practised dietetics for at least 500 hours during the preceding three years. "

AND

- To provide a measure that assures⁴ the public and interested parties that dietitians registered in Ontario practise safely, competently, and ethically.

Policy Purpose

To set out criteria for members to accurately complete their annual renewal declaration requirements regarding dietetic practice hours currency requirements.

This includes:

¹ A 'currency requirement' refers to recent practice hours experience within a specific period, demonstrating that a member's skills or related work experience are up to date.

² The College is required to establish and operate a Quality Assurance Program for its members to encourage and assist members in being the best dietitians possible. The program is non-punitive, and participation is mandatory.

³ Under the *Dietetics Act*, the College has the mandate to regulate the dietetics profession. Its duty is to serve and protect the public interest. The College does not exist to advance the interests of the dietetic profession; this is the role of professional associations. Still, there is no doubt that a well-regulated profession preserves its reputation and stature.

⁴ All members of the College, regardless of their employment status or area of practice are required to participate in the Quality Assurance Program. Members practicing and/or residing out-of-province are also included.

- i. What counts as dietetic practice; and
- ii. Criteria considerations when determining whether certain activities contribute to meeting the College's minimum 500 hours/3 years dietetic practice hour currency requirement.

Categories to Determine What Counts as a Practice Hour

Consider these overarching categories when deciding whether a task counts as dietetic practice hours:

1. The activity or task falls within the **updated** College definition of practising dietetics⁵ (Appendix i), and this definition assists dietitians in determining which tasks count as practice hours.
2. The activity or task falls within the performance of a delegated controlled act according to [Practising Under the Delegation of Controlled Act](#) Standards while still relying on dietetic competencies as a foundation for performing the controlled act when practising the act as a dietitian.
3. The activity or task considered outside of the dietetic scope of practice has transferability to dietetic practice, reflects the knowledge and skills outlined in the [Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice \(ICDEP\)](#), and requires the status of active regulated health professional. For example:
 - Dietitians as health care professionals were asked by their employers to perform temporary redeployment duties using the competencies they are expected to hold and maintain throughout their dietetic careers (e.g., communication and collaboration, management and leadership, professionalism and ethics). For this policy, temporary redeployment should be understood as employment (either new or continuing) within the public health system to perform activities that are non-traditional for dietitians in support of the public health response to prevent or alleviate the effects of the COVID-19. These activities include but are not limited to contact tracing, health screening, assisting clients/patients with activities of daily living, supporting immunization clinics, or other related healthcare functions.
 - Given the above, starting at renewal 2022, dietitians who are redeployed will be able to count up to 166 currency hours per year of redeployed work until we are out of the pandemic. In addition, any time spent practising dietetics will be counted as usual.

Applying the Category to Determine Practice Hours

- a) Ultimately, the purpose of the requirement to maintain at least 500 hours of dietetic practice is to ensure that dietitians can practise dietetics safely, ethically and competently.
- b) Using the categories above, members should exercise reasonable professional judgement to determine their practice hour determinations based on the individual circumstances related to their specific role and practice setting

⁵ The College definition of [practising dietetics](#) was developed to assist members in determining practice hours. The definition is quite broad and includes various practice areas and workplace settings. The description provides examples of activities for guidance but is not exhaustive. This definition is not intended to apply to other contexts (e.g., whether liability insurance is required for the activity, what cannot be done while one is suspended or one's practice is restricted).

- c) Being a professional means practising while considering the following abilities⁶:
 - a. Being reflective and committed to safe, competent, ethical practice
 - b. Practise with integrity, humility, honesty, diligence, respect and treat others fairly and equitably.
 - c. Valuing dignity and worth of all persons regardless of age, race, culture, creed, sexual identity, gender, body weight, ableness and/or health status
 - d. Complying with legal requirements and professional obligations
 - e. Applying the principles of sensitive practice and functioning in a client-centred manner
 - f. Working within areas of personal knowledge and skills
 - g. Maintaining a safe work environment
 - h. Maintaining personal wellness consistent with the needs of the practice
 - i. Using an evidence-informed approach to your work
 - j. Act ethically, respecting autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and respect for justice.
- d) Out of province dietetic practice counts towards practice hours, provided members practise dietetics according to the definition of practising dietetics (dietitians must follow jurisdictional requirements as applicable).
- e) The definition of practising dietetics is quite broad and includes various practice areas and workplace settings. Practicing dietetics does not only include dietitians who work directly with patients/clients.

Monitoring

The policy will be monitored annually.

Risk of Harm Provision. The definition in the policy might have an impact on the risk of harm provision found in s. 30 of the *RHPA*. The College will address any unprofessional conduct through its discipline process.

References

College of Dietitians of Ontario. 500 Hours (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.collegeofdietitians.org/programs/quality-assurance/500-hours-of-practice.aspx>

College of Dietitians of Ontario. What Counts as a Practice Hour (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.collegeofdietitians.org/cdo-masterpage/resources/newsletters/2021-issue-1-may/what-counts-as-a-practice-hour.aspx>

Knowles, M. (1980). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*. Chicago, IL: Association/Follet Press

⁶ Adapted from the College of Massage Therapist of Ontario (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.cmto.com/rmts/quality-assurance-program/strive/>

Appendix I: Revised Definition of Practising Dietetics

The College definition of practising dietetics, for the purpose of counting current hours only⁷, assists dietitians in determining which tasks count as practice hours⁸.

- a) "Dietetic Practice can be in a paid or unpaid capacity (e.g., volunteer work) for which members use food & nutrition-specific knowledge, skills and judgment while engaging in:
 - i. the assessment of nutrition-related to health status and conditions for individuals, groups and populations;
 - ii. the management and delivery of nutrition therapy to treat disease;
 - iii. the management of food services systems; building the capacity of individuals and populations to promote, maintain or restore health and prevent disease through nutrition and related means;
 - iv. the management, education or leadership that contributes to the enhancement and quality of dietetic and health services."

- b) For greater clarity, the dietetic practice includes the following activities:
 - I. Assessing nutrition status in clinical settings to provide meal plans, nutrition guidance or advice and/or formulating therapeutic diets to manage and/or treat diseases or nutrition-related disorders.
 - II. Managing food and nutrition services, food provision, and developing food services processes in hospitals and other health care facilities, schools, universities, and businesses.
 - III. Conducting dietetic, health and evaluation research, product development, product marketing, and consumer education to develop, promote and market food and nutritional products and pharmaceuticals related to nutrition disorders or nutritional health.
 - IV. Assessing compliance of long-term care homes to meet the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care standards related to nutrition and hydration of residents.
 - V. Developing or advocating for food and nutrition policy.
 - VI. Teaching, mentoring, and precepting related to dietetic competencies, nutrition, food chemistry, food policy, or food systems service administration to students in dietetics or other professions, schools, the food and hospitality industry, and/or other healthcare providers.
 - VII. Planning and engaging in direct food & nutrition research.
 - VIII. Communicating food & nutrition information in any print, radio, television, video, Internet or multi-media format.
 - IX. Directly managing, supervising or assuring the quality of front-line employees and dietetic staff engaged in any previously mentioned dietetic practice circumstances.

⁷ All members of the College must ensure that they are clearly identified as a dietitian when practising dietetics by using the title of "Registered Dietitian" or the designation of "RD", or the French equivalent, "diététiste professionnel(le)" and "Dt.P."

⁸ Liability insurance is mandatory for all College members — temporary and general — who practice dietetics. However, the definition of what activities require liability insurance may differ slightly from those described in this policy.

- X. Developing regulations, programs, dietetic competencies, and policies to deliver safe, ethical, and quality dietetic service to protect the public (including participation in Council and committee work, College assessors, Item writers and/or staff with a Dietetic Regulatory or Health Professional body).

The College does not consider the following activities as practising dietetics:

- Holding a position solely in non-dietetic management (e.g., Vice President or Administrator of a hospital or other organization).
- Holding a position solely in human resources (HR), information technology (IT), or risk management.
- Engaging in sales or marketing of pharmaceuticals that are not related to nutrition.
- Assessing facility processes to meet accreditation standards related to non-dietetic management of facility (e.g., hospital) processes to meet healthcare accreditation standards
- Know that professional development is not practising dietetics. While professional development can help a dietitian maintain or increase competency, it is not practicing dietetics; it is professional development.