



Policy

Currency¹ of Practice Experience for Dietitians - What Counts as a Practice Hour

Effective Date

1.1 This policy takes effect on - TBD

Preamble

The purpose of the College's monitoring of members practising fewer than 500 hours in 3 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 assures the public and interested parties that dietitians registered in Ontario practise safely, competently, and ethically.

¹ A 'currency requirement' is a requirement for recent experience that demonstrates that a member's skills or related work experience is 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.

Policy Purpose

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

This includes:

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

Criteria to Determine What Counts as a Practise Hour

Consider these overarching criteria when deciding whether a task counts as dietetic practise hours:

1. The activity or task falls within the **updated** College definition of practising dietetics (Appendix i), and this definition assists dietitians in determining which tasks count as practise 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 practising dietetics.
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 a regulated health professional. For example:
 - Dietitians as health care professionals were asked by their employers to perform redeployment duties using the competencies they are expected to hold and maintain throughout their careers (e.g., communication and collaboration, management and leadership, professionalism, and ethics). For this policy, redeployment should be understood as employment (either new or continuing) within the 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 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, for the 2022 renewal year, dietitians who are redeployed will be able to count up to two years (330 currency hours) out of the required 500 currency hours requirement for the preceding three years (e.g., November 1, 2019, October 31, 2022). In addition, any time spent practising dietetics will be counted as usual.

Applying the Criteria to Determine Practise Hours

- a) Ultimately, the requirement to maintain at least 500 hours of dietetic practice is to ensure that dietitians can practice dietetics safely, ethically and competently.

- b) Using the criteria above, members should exercise their professional judgement and make practise hour determinations based on the individual circumstances related to their specific role and practice setting while considering the following abilities⁴:
 - a. Being reflective and committed to safe, competent, ethical practice
 - b. Practising with integrity, humility, honesty, diligence and respect
 - c. Valuing dignity and worth of all persons regardless of age, race, culture, creed, sexual identity, gender, body weight, ableness and 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
- c) Members should compare their roles and responsibilities in their employment and volunteer work to the College's definition of practising dietetics.
- d) If a dietitian works within food, nutrition, health or health education, health research or health management-related settings, these are considered practising dietetics.
- e) Out-of-province dietetic practise counts towards practice hours, provided members practise dietetics according to the definition of practising dietetics (dietitians must follow jurisdictional requirements as applicable).
- f) The definition of practising dietetics is broad and includes various practice areas and workplace settings. Practising dietetics does not only include dietitians who work directly with patients/clients.
- g) 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.

Monitoring

The policy will be monitored annually.

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

⁴ Adapted from the College of Massage Therapist of Ontario (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.cmta.com/rmts/quality-assurance-program/strive/>

Appendix I: Proposed Revised Definition of Practising Dietetics (Revisions highlighted in Red)

The College definition of practising dietetics, this definition assists dietitians in determining which tasks count as practice hours.

- a) "Dietetic Practise **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. Assessing, promoting, protecting and enhancing health and the prevention of nutrition-related diseases in populations using population health and health promotion approaches and strategies focusing on the interactions among the determinants of health, food security, and overall health.
 - III. Managing food and management service and developing food services processes in hospitals and other health care facilities, schools, universities, and businesses.
 - IV. Conducting 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.
 - V. 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.
 - VI. Developing or advocating for food and nutrition policy.
 - VII. Teaching nutrition, food chemistry, or food service administration to students in **dietetics or other health professions, schools**, the food and hospitality industry, and/or other healthcare providers.
 - VIII. Planning and engaging in direct food & nutrition research.
 - IX. Communicating food & nutrition information in any print, radio, television, video, Internet or multi-media format.
 - X. Directly managing, supervising, or assuring the quality of front-line employees engaged in any previously mentioned dietetic practice circumstances.
 - XI. **Developing regulations, programs, 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.

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