



The Benefits of Supervising Learners

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Most dietitians will be asked to supervise a student or learner at some point during their career. Supervised practical training is an essential requirement for registration, and the College relies heavily on the judgment of the dietitians who assess the competence of applicants. For this reason, the College developed the *Guidelines for Supervising Learners (2014)*, which outlines the dietitian’s professional responsibilities in this important role.

Although there are many responsibilities involved in supervising a learner, there are also many benefits to the dietitians, their employer, and the profession as a whole. For example:

- **Keeping practice current.** Students and learners ask many questions. Answering those “why” questions will lead a dietitian and a learner to consult the latest research and evidence, which can lead to changes in practice.
- **More project work.** Students always value the opportunity to work on “real” projects. If it fits with the learning goals of the student, the RD may be able to assign that special project or literature review that has been delayed due to workload pressures.
- **Learning about other cultures.** Ontario is a diverse population and the population of interns and applicants to the College reflects that diversity. Supervising a learner can provide dietitians with the opportunity to learn about the role of food in other cultures.
- **Refining reflective practice skills.** By guiding someone else through the process of reflective practice, the dietitian may actually improve their own skills.
- **Giving back to the profession.** Every dietitian practising today has benefitted from the guidance and mentoring of other dietitians. Supervising a learner provides each

dietitian with the opportunity to give back to the profession in the same way.

LINKING PRECEPTORS WITH LEARNERS

Recruiting preceptors has always been a challenge for internship programs. The College is currently seeing a dramatic increase in the volume of applications from internationally educated dietitians who require bridging placements to become registered. They need preceptors to guide them. In recent years, internship and practicum programs have been exploring ways to expand capacity in response to the increasing enrollment at the undergraduate level. This expanded capacity is only possible if the programs have a sufficient supply of preceptors. The need for linking preceptors with learners is growing and is urgent.

REGISTRY OF PRECEPTORS

To help link potential preceptors with practicum programs or applicants, the College is creating a registry of dietitians will to supervise learners. During the renewal period this Fall 2016, you will be asked if you would consider supervising a learner. If yes, your name and contact information will be added to the College’s registry of potential preceptors. This list will be provided to practicum programs who need preceptors and to applicants who are required to do placements. We invite you to consider adding your name to the registry of preceptors.

For more information, please contact me at carolyn.lordon@collegeofdietitians.org

