

# RD Role & Task Decision Framework

RDs are encouraged to consider requests and opportunities for assuming new tasks and roles in a way that respects clients and interprofessional collaboration (IPC), and that appreciates the full scope of dietetics practice. This table shows how answering four central questions when

considering, “Can I, or should I do this?”, can be informed by focusing on client-centred services.

The College of Dietitians of Ontario is a resource for RDs as they explore new areas of practice.

SHOULD THE RD PERFORM THIS NEW TASK OR ROLE?	DECISIONS BASED ON CLIENT-CENTRED SERVICES
<p><b>IS THE NEW TASK OR ROLE WITHIN THE RD SCOPE OF PRACTICE?</b></p>	<p>Applying a narrow interpretation of the dietetic scope of practice based on traditional roles may sometimes conflict with client needs. When it does, RDs are encouraged to consult and carefully consider whether a restrictive interpretation unnecessarily limits how clients are served. The RD scope of practice statement in the <i>Dietetics Act</i> and the College definition of practising dietetics enables a very broad spectrum of activities as the scope relates to using the knowledge of food and nutrition, and working in areas related to nutritional conditions and disorders and the prevention and treatment of these.</p>
<p><b>ARE THERE ANY LEGAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO PERFORMING THIS NEW TASK OR ROLE?</b></p>	<p>Organizational policies, the <i>Regulated Health Professions Act</i>, <i>Dietetics Act</i>, <i>Public Hospitals Act</i>, and other legislation limit who can do what and under what conditions (e.g. an order or prescription). Flexibility exists within this organizational and legal framework and is intended to be used to meet client needs as long as safety and quality are given due consideration in the decision-making.</p>
<p><b>DOES THE RD HAVE THE REQUIRED SKILLS &amp; COMPETENCE TO PERFORM THE NEW TASK OR ROLE?</b></p>	<p>Competence includes knowledge, skill and judgment. Competent execution of roles and tasks is an essential professional responsibility to ensure clients benefit from practice activities and that they are not harmed. New areas of competence can be acquired at any time during a professional’s career. If client needs are better served by having an RD perform new tasks or roles, then the RDs must consider how to acquire the new area of competence. This is an important part of the decision and planning around new tasks and roles. Simply to say “no” based on existing competence may well fail to meet client needs.</p>
<p><b>WHAT ARE THE IPC POSSIBILITIES?</b></p>	<p><b>Decisions should be made in the clients’ best interest, taking into consideration scope of practice and what is intrinsically related to it, organizational and legal flexibilities, and the acquisition of competence. The outcome may not lead to a simple “yes” or “no”, but open to interprofessional possibilities.</b></p>