

Queensland Health, Health Practitioner Core Competency Descriptor

Nutritionist

DISCIPLINE DESCRIPTOR:

Nutritionists apply scientific principles and methods in the field of nutrition to influence the broad environment affecting food supply and eating behaviour, to enhance nutritional status and prevent chronic diseases. Nutritionists design, coordinate, implement and evaluate a range of population health interventions to improve the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the population as a whole, through better food and nutrition.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

1. Knowledge in Practice

1.1 Knowledge of population health prevention, promotion and protection concepts and strategies including but not limited to health status of populations, inequalities in health status and the determinants of health (biological, social, cultural, environmental, economic and physical).

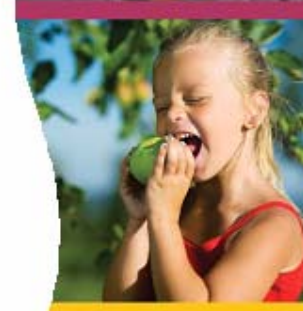
- 1.1.1 Understand food sources of nutrients and other major dietary components.
- 1.1.2 Understand the role of food, diets, nutrients and physical activity in the maintenance of health and prevention of disease
- 1.1.3 Understand the methods for acquiring and interpreting information about health and nutritional status.
- 1.1.4 Understand food and nutrition monitoring and surveillance systems.

1.2 Use of evidence and research to target and inform population health interventions and influence access to and delivery of health services.

- 1.2.1 Understand the links between evidence and action as a basis for food and nutrition policy development.

1.3 Knowledge of state, national and international developments in population health prevention, promotion and protection strategies.

- 1.3.1 Understand the purpose and application of the Dietary Guidelines for Australians, the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, the Nutrient Reference Values and





other standards, reference data, and relevant health policies and strategic documents.

1.4 Understand how the determinants of health (biological, social, cultural, environmental, economic and physical) influence the health and well-being of the population and the interaction between public policies, lifestyles, consumption patterns, urbanisation and health.

1.4.1 Understand how the determinants of health influence food intake and the health and well-being of specific population groups.

1.4.2 Understand how food production, supply and preparation can determine nutrient content and impact on the environment.

1.4.3 Understand the economic, environmental, social, cultural, political & behavioural factors that influence food supply, choice, access, and consumption, nutrition and health status.

1.4.4 Understand the political and institutional context of the health of populations.

1.5 Knowledge of project management principles (including scope, time, cost, procurement, quality, risk, human resource, and communication management) as they apply to population health interventions.

2. Health Intervention Planning and Implementation

2.1 Develop evidence based options to address a specific population health issue and assess the implications of each option to formulate appropriate and measurable program goals, objectives and strategies.

2.1.1 Apply relevant theory and evidence in the planning, implementation and evaluation of nutrition interventions.

2.2 Understand the principles and processes of policy development and implementation in promoting and protecting health and preventing disease and injury.

2.2.1 Understand the links between evidence and action as a basis for food and nutrition policy development.

2.3 Plan and implement multi-strategy population health interventions to contribute to defined policy and program outcomes.

2.3.1 Plan, implement and manage nutrition interventions within existing financial and operational frameworks.

2.4 Identify risks and apply principles of risk management.

3. Needs Analysis and Assessment

- 3.1 Identify the health issues that exist in and impact on populations.
- 3.2 Identify behavioural, environmental and organisational factors that promote or compromise health.
- 3.3 Identify relevant and appropriate sources of information
- 3.4 Collect, manage and analyse data to determine appropriate implications, uses, gaps and limitations in information on population health issues.
 - 3.4.1 Collect, assess and analyse nutrition and other relevant information to identify routine nutrition issues in populations and make evidence based decisions.
- 3.5 Interpret the meaning of information, considering the current ethics, political, socio-cultural and economic context.
 - 3.5.1 Interpret and translate scientific knowledge and principles related to nutrition into practical information.
- 3.6 Recommend specific actions based on analysis and interpretation of information.
- 3.7 Report and communicate through appropriate channels to inform population health policy and practice.

4. Partnerships, Collaboration and Advocacy

- 4.1 Identify partners and other stakeholders through a process of proactive and responsive engagement.
 - 4.1.1 Identify and collaborate with partners in addressing nutrition issues for priority population groups, including those which are specific to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, and culturally and linguistically diverse groups
- 4.2 Participate in, develop and maintain sustainable community and professional partnerships to enhance population health outcomes.
- 4.3 Collaborate with partners and other stakeholders in the planning and delivery of clinical services to achieve positive population health outcomes.
- 4.4 Advocate on issues of population health significance to influence healthy public policy and practice across sectors and jurisdictions.





4.4.1 Influence and contribute to activities promoting a safe and nutritious food supply.

5. Cultural Competency Skills and Health Equity

5.1 Consider population diversity and health inequality and apply culturally- relevant and ethical approaches based on the Cultural Respect Framework when planning, implementing and evaluating population health interventions.

5.2 Interact sensitively, effectively and professionally with people from diverse cultural, socioeconomic and education backgrounds.

5.3 Understand and respect cultural differences when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

6. Communication

6.1 Communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders and populations by using appropriate resources, techniques and technologies.

6.2 Apply interpersonal skills in communication with colleagues, partners and the public.

6.3 Inform and influence individuals and communities by using appropriate media, community resources and social marketing techniques.

6.4 Provide expert advice on population health matters.

7. Leadership

7.1 Communicate and apply shared visions, missions and values as well as building capacity, improving performance and enhancing the quality of the working environment.

7.2 Contribute to team and organisational quality and performance standards, through ethical practice that acknowledges and respects the dignity, culture, values, beliefs and rights of individuals and populations.

7.3 Understand the context and the environment in which decision making occurs in relation to population health interventions.



7.4 Understand the contribution and role of other government and community partners for improving the health and wellbeing of the population.

7.5 Promote and contribute to reflective practice, professional development and an active collegiate learning environment.

7.6 Build the capacity of communities and organisations to improve population health outcomes by sharing knowledge, tools, expertise and experience.

7.7 Recognise the competencies and qualities that make successful leaders.

8. Evaluation, Research and Knowledge Translation

8.1 Utilise relevant literature and research findings to improve evidence based practice.

8.2 Locate and systematically review the information and assess its quality and usefulness for the purposes of public health research, policy and practice.

8.3 Conduct research and evaluation according to research and project management principles.

8.4 Select and design appropriate evaluation and research methods and instruments.

8.5 Monitor programs, objectives and strategies based on the analysis of data.

8.6 Analyse quantitative and qualitative data to understand program effectiveness

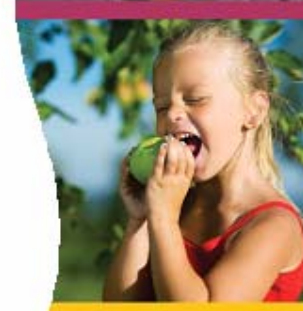
8.7 Report and communicate findings through appropriate channels to contribute to the evidence base and promote population health outcomes.

9. Use of Technology

9.1 Uses appropriate technology and software to collect and analyse data relevant to Population Health.

9.2 Uses appropriate technology to communicate effectively.

9.3 Awareness and use of current and emergent technology in delivering population health services.





10. Management and Administration

- 10.1 Apply financial human and operational management frameworks to population health interventions.
- 10.2 Manage population health interventions and strategies within quality, time and budget constraints.
- 10.3 Demonstrate skills that foster collaboration and support, partnership and team building to achieve population health outcomes.

11. Learning and Development

- 11.1 Understand the importance of and engage in the activities of lifelong learning and development
- 11.2 Maintain professional currency.
- 11.3 Support and develop the competence and professional development of colleagues.

Primary source:

- Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada Release 1.0 (Public Health Agency of Canada)

Secondary sources:

- Competency Standards for Public Health Practice 2007 (Public Health Education Research Program)
- Public Health Practice in Australia Today, A statement of core functions (National Public Health Partnership)
- Specialist Competencies in Nutrition Science (Nutrition Society of Australia 2007)
- National Competency Standards for Entry-level Dietitians (Dietitians Association of Australia)
- A Competency framework for Public health Nutrition Workforce Development (Australian Public Health Nutrition Academic Collaboration(2005)

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