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Scope of Practice of Accredited Dietitians of the Hong Kong Academy of Accredited Dietitians

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Summary of Changes

	Location	Changes in version 1
1.	Whole document	Revised the document title.
2.	Table of contents	Updated the table of contents.
3.	Section 3.0	- Added a section 3.2 on xxx. - Revised wordings in section 3.3.1.
4.	Appendix II	Modified Appendix II.
	Location	Changes in version 2
5.	Whole document	Revised the document title. “Accredited” is inserted
6.	Whole document	“Registrants” and “HKAAD Dietitians” replaced with “Accredited Dietitian “
7.	Whole document	“Council” replaced with Professional Council”

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Objectives

HKAAD recognizes that Accredited Dietitians may work in multiple practice areas and settings and/or may focus in some particular areas or with specific populations. It is also acknowledged that particular care should be exercised when working with vulnerable groups such as children, elderly or those with mental health issues.


This document outlines the common occupational roles of Accredited Dietitians practicing in Hong Kong. The activities directed, performed and provided by Accredited Dietitians are described and take into account the Accredited Dietitians education and training, necessity to comply with Code of Ethics and practice competency standards. Reference has also been made to the Scope of Practice as outlined by international dietetic associations (6.0.1-11).

1.2 Scope

Accredited Dietitians are required to assume responsibility for their competence and to act with integrity, honesty and within the limits of their qualifications and expertise. This document outlines the procedures, actions, processes and services undertaken and typically offered by Accredited Dietitians practicing in Hong Kong. HKAAD recognize that the occupational role(s) of Accredited Dietitians may vary and its boundaries may evolve over time as new knowledge and evidence becomes available. A framework is therefore also provided to guide dietitians in determining whether particular activities are within the scope of safe dietetic practice for an individual practitioners.

2.0 Education, training and work of Accredited Dietitians

- 2.0.1 Accredited Dietitians must hold a university degree (baccalaureate, master, post-graduate diploma or doctoral) in dietetics which includes supervised dietetics training (i.e. practice based dietetic placement) in various settings including but not limited to hospital, community and food service.
- 2.0.2 Accredited Dietitians are clinically trained to provide individualized medical nutrition therapy which includes nutritional diagnosis, designing individualized meals plans, providing nutritional counselling and recommending nutritional supplements when appropriate. Accredited Dietitians are qualified to provide nutrition services to both the healthy as well as those with chronic illnesses.
- 2.0.3 Accredited Dietitians work in areas including public and private hospitals, private practice, community health centers, food industry and catering services, elderly homes, educational and training institutes and nutrition research etc.

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3.0 Dietetic Practice

3.1 Nutrition Care Process (NCP)

The services provided by Accredited Dietitians will be guided by the Nutrition Care Process (NCP) developed by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND 2017). The Nutrition Care Process is a systematic and standard process for patient/client/population nutrition care and involve distinct and interrelated implementation of workflow practices (namely, nutrition assessment, nutrition diagnosis, nutrition intervention and nutrition monitoring and evaluation) and utilizes a standardized language.

3.2 Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT)

- 3.2.1 Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) is the evidence-based application of the Nutrition Care Process to provide cost-effective comprehensive nutrition care for the prevention, delay or management of diseases and/or condition, in individuals/groups. MNT is the standard and systematic nutrition care process that utilizes all domains of nutrition intervention, including food and/or nutrient delivery, nutrition education, nutrition counselling and coordination of nutrition care as defined in the Nutrition Terminology Reference Manual (AND Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 2014).
- 3.2.2 Accredited Dietitians utilize the NCP workflow in the initiation, adjustment and monitoring of MNT. It may include: in-depth assessment of nutritional status, nutrition-focused physical examination, recommend/perform/interpret nutrition-related test results (such as anthropometric findings, laboratory tests), order nutrition-related laboratory tests (with granted or delegated order from referring physician), order and monitor nutrition interventions (such as prescribed diets and/or meal plan, medical foods, dietary supplements, over-the-counter medications, and enteral/parenteral feeds).

4.0 Practice Areas, Services and Activities


Traditionally, Accredited Dietitians are employed in health care settings however, Accredited Dietitians may practice in diverse areas such as food production, food safety, food systems management, public health, community nutrition, information and communication technology, or research.

4.1 Healthcare

Accredited Dietitians may provide services and /or work in hospitals, clinics community/rehabilitation centers, long-term and post-acute or assisted-living facilities. Services and activities include nutrition education, MNT, counseling, discharge planning, care coordination, prevention and nutrition management of diseases and medical conditions.

4.2 Business and Nutrition Informatics

Accredited Dietitians possess the skill for effective retrieval and use of nutrition-related information for problem solving and decision making in business and nutrition-information

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technology. Accredited Dietitians may be employed as consultants, managers, designers and official bearers for the participation, management and direction of nutrition-related business. This includes the media industry, culinary and retail, corporate or agribusiness; through in-person or via telehealth nutrition practices, such as nutrient analysis, menu/recipes design, journal writing, etc.

4.3 Health and Wellness

Accredited Dietitians possess the knowledge and counseling skills needed to empower individuals or groups to implement lifestyle and behavior changes to achieve and maintain wellness. Accredited Dietitians may work as health and wellness coaches in health-care/fitness facilities.

4.4 Community and Public Health

Accredited Dietitians are able to monitor, educate, advice and advocate on nutrition-related population health/programs/issues. Accredited Dietitians may act as leaders, educators, consultants and researchers, in various organizations and schools.

4.5 Entrepreneurial and Private Practice

Accredited Dietitians may work in private practice as entrepreneurs and innovators for the provision of nutrition products/services. They may act as professional speakers, consultants, spokespersons, writers, journalist, chefs, wellness coaches etc. for profit- or non-profit organizations and businesses.

4.6 Food Service

Accredited Dietitians may manage and direct foodservice operations in health care and other settings.

4.7 Research and Universities


Accredited Dietitians are able to interpret, apply and instruct research findings related to food technology, nutrition science and dietetic practice. Accredited Dietitians may be employed in general and clinical research, in academic/commercial/non-profit organizations. Accredited Dietitians work and responsibilities may include the application/management of grants/nutrition-related research, teaching, the developments of policy and recommendations,

4.8 School Nutrition

Accredited Dietitians may be employed in profit/non-profit organizations, including catering/food service companies, to act as educators, operators, managers, or consultants. They promote, implement, interpret and manage school nutrition programmes based on updated and relevant dietary guidelines.

4.9 Sports Nutrition

Accredited Dietitians are able to promote/guide optimal physical performance through nutrition intervention, the prevention and management of nutrition-related sport injury, and the

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management of food provision for the active. Accredited Dietitians may be employed as consultants/coaches for individual/group athletes, including sports institute, school/college/professional/private sport organization, military and rehabilitation centers.

5.0 Extended Scope of Service

Through additional training to improve outcome and efficient management of care, some Accredited Dietitians may provide additional services.

5.1 Examples of Extended Services

Order writing privileges, inserting/replacing nasogastric feeding tubes, taking blood glucose levels, adjusting insulin dosages, advising on appropriate exercise regimens and other procedures pertinent to the dietetic area of practice. The implementation of such practice, have resulted in improved outcome, for timely and appropriate nutrition intervention (Roberts 2013).


5.2 Education and Training for Extended Services

Accredited Dietitians offering extended scope of services should possess relevant experience, credentials, additional training for the extended scope of service; and where appropriate, the formal permission through regulatory agencies at hospital/organization.

HKAAD dietitian should utilize the framework provided in Appendix 1 to assess and guide their extended scope of practice safely and ethically.

6.0 Review

The Scope of Practice as outlined in this document will be updated and reviewed by the Education and Training Committee and changes if any approved by the Professional Council every 3 years after taking into consideration stakeholder feedback, relevant research and evidence as well as development of the dietetics profession in Hong Kong. Updates will be disseminated to Accredited Dietitians by e-mail within 2-4 weeks and made available on the HKAAD website within 3 months of effective date.


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8.0 Management Endorsement

This document has been approved by the Professional Council of HKAAD .

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Appendix 1

Framework to assess if an activity falls within an individual Accredited Dietitian's scope of practice*

Before undertaking an activity (or providing a service) Accredited Dietitians should consider the following to determine if it falls within their scope of practice:

1. Is activity consistent with the HKAAD Code of ethics and conduct?
2. Is the activity reasonable for a dietitian practitioner to do?
3. Is the activity compliant with relevant guidelines, standards and regulations?
4. Is the activity approved by my employer?
5. Do I have the knowledge, skills and demonstrated competence needed?
6. Can I demonstrate the knowledge, skill and competency through participation in a credentialing programme e.g. completed relevant training and/or examination, undergone formal supervision
7. Do I accept responsibility and accountability for my actions?
8. Does my current insurance policy and level cover this activity?
9. Do I have supporting evidence supporting 2 to 8 e.g., certificates, statement policies, supporting correspondence from manager etc.

If the answer to ALL the questions is 'yes' you have ascertained that you are competent to perform the activity.

If the answer to question 1 is "no" you should NOT proceed.

If the answer to any of questions 2 to 9 is "no" you should "stop and resolve" as the activity may place dietetics practitioner or service user at risk

Examples of how you may "resolve" include:

- Discuss with employer and refer to more competent practitioner
- Complete a competency-based learning and development programme
- Undertake formal supervision from a more experienced practitioner
- Arrange/purchase appropriate insurance coverage

If it is not possible to "resolve" (i.e., you remain unable to answer "yes" to ALL questions despite any remedial actions) then you should NOT undertake the activity as it is not within your scope of practice.

If you undertake activity before "resolving" you will be violating the HKAAD Code of Ethics and Conduct which stipulates you "must work within the limitations of their own knowledge and qualifications" and will be subject to disciplinary action.

*Adapted from Dietitian Scope of Practice, Dietitians Association of Australia