

28 August 2020

Health and Care Professions Council response to the BDA's consultation on the BDA Curriculum Framework

1. About us

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is a statutory regulator of healthcare and psychological professions governed by the Health Professions Order 2001. We regulate the members of 15 professions, including dietitians. We maintain a register of professionals, set standards for entry to our register, approve education and training programmes for registration and deal with concerns where a professional may not be fit to practise. Our role is to protect the public.

2. Response to the consultation

The HCPC is currently consulting on changes to the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs), which are frequently referred to in this document. Whilst we have proposed particular changes, we cannot anticipate the outcome of our consultation and therefore confirm the final version of the standards. Any changes will be subject to consultee feedback. We have therefore focused our responses on the current language of the SOPs, as opposed to our proposed changes.

Our response is also focused on ensuring the Curriculum does not conflict with the requirements set in our standards; that is what is required for safe and effective practice. We recognise that we do not set best practice standards, nor do we have the clinical expertise to provide detailed comments in relation to the specific competencies in the field of dietetics. We defer to the profession and professional body in these instances.

Question 1: Please tick the category below that best describes your organisation/role:

HCPC

Question 2: In which country are you based?

England

Question 3: Do you think that the draft BDA 2020 Curriculum Framework would prepare learners with the relevant level of dietetic knowledge to register as a dietitian and practice both now and in the future?

Agree.

We are supportive of the draft Curriculum in relation to dietetic knowledge. It is very comprehensive and broadly aligns with the requirements set out in the current SOPs.

We particularly favour the increased references to digital skills, through the inclusion of e-Health, tele-health and electronic health records. Whilst not a feature of the SOPs, this is something we are keen to place greater emphasis on in the future and so will future proof the Curriculum.

Whilst we broadly agree, we do note that consent is not featured in this section. It is important registrants are aware of the need to obtain consent and how. The draft Curriculum currently requires dietitians to understand legislation, but the focus appears to be on personal identifiable information. Understanding when to share confidential information is important, but we would also suggest that understanding of legislation surrounding capacity and consent to treatment also be included.

Question 4: Do you think that the draft BDA 2020 Curriculum Framework would prepare learners with the relevant level of dietetic skills to register as a dietitian and practice both now and in the future?

Agree.

We are supportive of this section of the draft Curriculum. In particular, we like the positive mention of social media, although would like to ensure that what is or is not appropriate use would be with reference to our Guidance.

We also are supportive of the focus on supervision and the clear expectations for dietitians regarding participation and how they respond to feedback. We also like the clear focus on communication, with a range of audiences and means of communicating in mind.

5. Do you think that the draft BDA 2020 Curriculum Framework would prepare learners with the relevant level of dietetic values and behaviours to register as a dietitian and practice both now and in the future?

Agree.

We are broadly supportive of this part of the draft Curriculum and believe it covers what values and behaviours we would expect from a registrant.

We are particularly supportive of references to the HCPC's work in this area, and believe the way this has been drafted sufficiently future-proofs the Curriculum. For example, we like the phrasing of 'Demonstrate professional behaviour as stipulated by the HCPC' and believe this will accommodate our future work in this area. We also like how reflective practice and leadership are addressed.

However, we feel that certain elements could be greater emphasised in this section. Our particular focus is on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). We note that the Curriculum refers to the need to have knowledge of 'how social organisation including inclusion, exclusion, health inequalities, social injustice, social inequality

and different cultural belief systems impact on health and disease' and 'Maintain relationships with other professionals and service users that are culturally sensitive and respect the rights of individuals and their specific needs'. It also requires dietitians to meet the standards set by HCPC, including the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics. However, we think there needs to be a clearer expectation throughout the Curriculum of the important role registrants play in challenging discrimination and ensuring EDI is respected in the workplace. We would suggest that the BDA embed this in the similar way that sustainability currently is in the draft Curriculum (i.e. from different angles, within values and behaviour but also knowledge).

We also question if explicitly mentioning a dietitian's own mental health (as opposed to just health) would be beneficial in this section. Whilst not in the current SOPs, this is a key focus of our review and so likely to be a growing area in our standards.

Whilst the expectations to meet our standards are clear, we would also welcome a reference to our Guidance. This currently covers the topics of confidentiality and social media, plus further information online, but is likely to expand in the future.

Finally, we would suggest that the complex ethical issues surrounding conflicts of interest and commercial relationships perhaps warrant a place in this section. As an area of particular interest and concern to dietitians at present, there could be some value in embedding this in the Curriculum. This would include ensuring registrant's are familiar with the relevant legislation affecting the promotion of food products and health professionals making nutritional claims.

Question 6: Do you have any comments on the format of the Curriculum? Is it user friendly?

Agree

The Curriculum is formatted in a clear and engaging way. The PDF's ability to link to other parts of the document makes it particularly user friendly as is the use of imagery.

Question 7: Do you have any other comments about the BDA Curriculum Framework?

No.