Pedagogic standards for dietetic placement teachers

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and rationale

'DIETS' refers to the acronym for the first network (2006-09): Dietitians Improving the Education and Training Standards. DIETS2 is the second network 'Dietitians ensuring education, teaching and professional quality' funded by the EACEA (2010-13). Dietitians come together from higher education institutes (HEIs), professional associations and others to improve education at all levels (JQI, 2004) and make the dietetic curricular transparent (European Academic and Practitioner Standards For Dietetics, EFAD 2005) and accessible (European Credit Transfer Scheme, see publication by DIETS2 available soon!). The Network works across 31 countries in Europe and with international partners. (www.thematicnetworkdietetics.eu)

The pedagogic standards have been prepared by a Work Package of DIETS2 named 'Supporting Work based/Placement Learning'. The development of pedagogic standards for practice teachers to improve the quality of the learning environment was first proposed by the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) in its Roskilde Declaration in 2003 (see Appendix 1). In 2010 European Practice Placement Standards for Dietetics were adopted by EFAD to provide guidance and standards for the placement which all dietitians undertake as part of the preparation for graduating as a professional dietitian.

1.2 Development

The development of these pedagogic standards has used practice placement/work based learning data, the EFAD Standards for Practice Placements (EFAD, 2010) and also drew on best practice from other professions and agencies (Appendix 1).

1.3 Consultation

This consultation document is being sent to partners in DIETS2 (HEIs) and National Dietetic Associations (NDAs through EFAD) to seek views and feedback.

The ultimate goal is to provide guidelines for practice placement teachers, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of quality, standards and outcomes with regard to practice placement learning facilitated by the teacher

1.4 Discussion

During the development of these Standards a discussion was initiated regarding the definition of dietetic practice. Many dietitians working in Europe would understand dietetic practice, in the context of these standards, to be preparation for the role played by dietitians in the workplace. The European Federation of the Associations of Dietetics (EFAD) has adopted the definition by the International Confederation of Dietetic Associations (ICDA) for the role of dietitians which is reproduced below.
A dietitian is a person with a qualification in Nutrition & Dietetics recognized by national authority(s). The dietitian applies the science of nutrition to the feeding and education of groups of people and individuals in health and disease.

The scope of dietetic practice is such that dietitians may work in a variety of settings and have a variety of work functions.

However who should direct and control the preparation of the student of dietetics for dietetic practice and particularly who is the best placed to teach students about dietetics in practice remained a discussion point.

The European Academic and Practitioner Standards for Dietetics provide a comprehensive understanding of the academic discipline of dietetics and that ‘The practical component will enable demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the subject and discipline of dietetics’ (EFAD, 2005 page 19). Further ‘Dietetics is concerned with the nutrition of the individual both in health and disease at a primary level and extends through to tertiary care in acute specialised medical provision. Practitioners of dietetics use their interpersonal skills, knowledge and expertise in other arenas such as industry (especially food and pharmaceutical), primary research and development, education, local government, the media and private practice’ (ibid page 10). Based on these acknowledged European Standards it could be stated that only a qualified dietetic practitioner would have the necessary academic and practice understanding to judge the competence of a dietetic student at the point of entry to the profession (EFAD, 2009) and therefore direct and manage the overall practice placement(s) period. This might include a period of placement in industry or local government where the student would be taught/supervised by a non-dietetic specialist in that area. However the role of the student would be to learn about the function of the workplace and consider how their dietetic knowledge and skills of nutrition are applied ‘to the feeding and education of groups of people and individuals in health and disease’.

2.0 Definition of Terms

Pedagogy:

Pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept (Oxford English Dictionary). Therefore pedagogy is an important subject with its own evidence and research base. Many scientific journals publish papers on effective teaching and educational methods.

Practice placement teacher:

The term ‘teacher’ has been used throughout this paper to emphasise the nature of the role. The dietitian working with students in practice should be seen as facilitator of learning and in so doing bridge the theory-practice gap. Practice placement teachers should provide a synthesis of ‘clinical’ (practice) and theoretical learning and act as role models demonstrating evidence based practice with respect to their pedagogic role (education), their theoretical and their practice competence.
The term supervisor has not been used as it is most often associated with the role of ‘supervisor of tasks’ not a teacher or facilitator of learning (Landers, 2000).

Dietetic placement teachers:

Teachers of students in placement settings where they are learning about professional dietetic practice will be known as Dietetic Placement Teachers. They have specialist knowledge and understanding in the process of education and facilitation of learning for students in a placement setting and have undergone a specialist education programme.

Dietetic practice:

* Suggestion of definition by the Professional Practice Committee of EFAD pending *

Standards:

In general, a standard can be defined as ‘a set of rules for ensuring quality. A document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context’ (ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, definition 3.2)

Professional teaching standards:

Professional teaching standards represent the teaching profession’s consensus on the critical aspects of the art and science of teaching (pedagogy) that characterizes accomplished teachers in various fields. Cast in terms of actions that teachers take to advance student outcomes, these standards also incorporate the essential pedagogical knowledge, skills, dispositions and commitments that allow teachers to practice at a high level. These standards rest on a fundamental philosophical foundation comprised of five core propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and have the necessary pedagogical knowledge.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

3.0 The proposed Pedagogic Standard for Dietetics Placement Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Number</th>
<th>Pedagogic Standard for Dietetics Placement Teachers</th>
<th>Source/Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher is a person with a qualification in Nutrition &amp; Dietetics recognised by national authority</td>
<td>EFAD(*)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher has a pedagogic certificate or equivalent formal education and training in facilitation of learning in practice</td>
<td>standard 15 of EPPSD 2010/ Gazette Austria(***).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher normally has at least one year of dietetic professional experience in a professional field relevant to the practice placement teaching</td>
<td>standard 15 of EPPSD 2010/ Gazette Austria.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher applies lifelong learning regarding his/her discipline</td>
<td>standard 15 of EPPSD 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher provides evidence based pedagogic practice as a teacher by seeking evaluative feedback from students and the HEI at the end of the practice placement experience</td>
<td>standard 18 of EPPSD 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher participates in the support and training provided by the Awarding Institution (HEI) concerning practice placement teaching</td>
<td>standard 14;15 of EPPSD 2010.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher arranges the learning environment in practice to meet the academic standards and quality specified by the Awarding Institution (HEI) and documents this in written policies and procedures</td>
<td>standard 5 of EPPSD 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher knows, understands and applies correctly the learning outcomes specified by the HEI.</td>
<td>standard 2 of EPPSD 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher knows, understands and applies correctly the evaluation system specified by the HEI</td>
<td>standard 3 of EPPSD 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher attends planned meetings between the practice placement partners and the HEI/awarding institution, with student involvement, to improve quality and advance the understanding of the effectiveness of placement</td>
<td>standard 17 of EPPSD 2010.</td>
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### The teaching, learning and education programme

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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher plans together with the student the programme of study for the student to meet the learning outcomes with the HEI</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher facilitates/encourages the learning process of the student in terms of a planned process</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher provides time for reflection, feedback and monitoring of students’ progress</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher ensures that students have constructive feedback, with suggestions on how to make further improvements to promote progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher is willing to share their knowledge with the student and the HEI contact person relevant for practice placement teaching</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher establishes and makes known the procedures to be followed if problems occur during the practice placement or a complaint needs to be made</td>
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### The practice placement environment

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<td>17</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher identifies specific learning opportunities that are available within the practice placement to the student</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher provides a safe work environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The dietetic placement teacher facilitates and encourages the integration of the student in the team/company</td>
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(*)EFAD: European Federation of the Association of Dietitians; (**)EPPSD: European practice placement standards for dietetics; (***)Gazette, Austria; (****)RCN: Royal College of Nursing ;(*****):DIETS 2 LLL Toolkit: Pedagogic skills of dietitians; (******)EUE-net guidelines: European University Enterprise Network
References


EFAD (2009) European Dietetic competences and their performance indicators; attained at the point of qualification and entry to the profession of Dietetics. Available at www.efad.org


Royal College of Nursing (2006) Helping students get the best from their practice placements: A Royal College of Nursing toolkit. Publication code 001 815

Gazette I No. 70/2005, the following ordinance is adopted: Minimum requirements for guidance during in-service training. Article 6. Ordinance of the Federal Minister for Health and Women on Bachelor Courses providing Education for Higher Clinical-Technical Professions at Universities of Applied Sciences, Austria

Pedagogic standards for dietetic placement teachers

Adopted by 24th EFAD General Meeting 2013
Appendix 1 Roskilde Declaration (EFAD, 2003)

At the EFAD General Meeting in September 2003 EFAD agreed priorities for the harmonisation of the education and practice of dietitians across Europe (Roskilde Declaration):

1. To agree a description of the role of the Dietitian in Europe
2. To investigate the requirement of a minimum qualification (3 yr degree) ‘benchmarked’
3. To agree European Academic and Practitioner Standards for Dietetics (a Benchmark Statement)
4. To set a benchmark for teachers of dietetics
5. To agree a common language by defining technical terms used
6. National registration of Dietitians to protect the title
7. Consideration be given to registration as a European Dietitian
Appendix 2 Reference documents

1. In general: Responsibilities of the Supervisor stated by the EUE-net guidelines for Practice Placements of students (2010):

- To ensure that students read the rules of how to behave inside the company;
- To accept the role of facilitator of learning;
- To provide a diversity of learning experience;
- To clarify the outcomes of the placement to the student;
- To provide a safe work environment;
- To help the student to integrate in the environment of the department


Practice Placement Learning Outcomes

Standard 1 Learning outcomes must be set for the practice placement(s) and must demonstrate how they contribute to the overall aims for the programme, normally through ECTS credit rating.

Standard 2 The learning outcomes must be clear to the practice placement teacher, student and academic member of staff.

Standard 3 The learning outcomes must be assessed appropriately.

Responsibilities for Academic Standards and Quality

Standard 4 The Awarding Institution (HEI) is responsible for the academic standards and quality of all learning environments, including practice placements.

Standard 5 The Awarding Institution (HEI) must have policies and procedures by which it is able to satisfy itself that i) the appropriate standards for the approval of practice placement are in place and ii) their ongoing quality of delivery of learning is clear.

Standard 6 The practice placement is a partner in delivery of the curriculum & must have a formal agreement of the roles and responsibilities including termination of an agreement.

Responsibilities of the Partners working together

Standard 7 Both parties will agree on the responsibilities of each other with respect to achieving a quality student learning experience.

Standard 8 Information, support and guidance materials should be available and drawn-up by the practice placement partners and Awarding Institutions (HEIs) in consultation.
Standard 9 Early warning systems of potential difficulties with the placement opportunity or student progress must be clearly articulated.

Standard 10 Students will be expected to demonstrate the use of reflection and its use in lifelong learning whilst on practice placement; the Awarding Institution (HEI) should prepare the students for this process adequately.

Standard 11 The practice placement and Awarding Institute (HEI) will make clear the role, responsibilities and entitlements the student may expect while on their placement.

Standard 12 Clear procedures should be in place and known to all if problems occur during the practice placement or a complaint needs to be made.

**Support for the Practice Placement Partners**

Standard 13 The Awarding Institution (HEI) should provide clear guidance for the practice placement partner on procedures for monitoring and reporting at the end of the placement.

Standard 14 The Awarding Institution (HEI) should provide appropriate support and training for the teachers and supervisors

**Staff Development for all those teaching students**

Standard 15 All staff within the Awarding Institution (HEI) or the practice placement must have appropriate access and be encouraged to undertake staff development in order to maintain a high quality learning experience for students.

Standard 16 Staff development should be monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure maintenance of competence

**Monitoring and evaluation of the student experience**

Standard 17 Regular planned meetings between the practice placement partners and awarding institution, with student involvement, should be used to improve quality and advance understanding of the effectiveness of placement learning.

Standard 18 Monitoring and evaluation should be shown to bring added benefit and improvement to the development of the curricular, the Profession and academia.

3. **Specifically: characteristics of profession stated by EFAD**

A dietitian is a person with a qualification in Nutrition & Dietetics recognised by national authority. *(DIETS website: European Dietetic Competences and their Performance Indicators, attained at the point of qualification and entry to the profession of Dietetics (2009))*

4. **Pedagogic skills of dietitians (LLL Toolkit pg 32: Guidelines for developing a teaching portfolio (Last access 10.05.2013)) stated by DIETS 2:*

*Educator skills of dietitians*
The competences of dietitians in this field can be described as:

- Demonstrating responsibility to contribute to the education and training of patients/clients, students, dietitians and other health professionals
- Demonstrating ability to prepare and present educational material through the critical evaluation and synthesis of relevant information to meet learning outcomes in appropriate settings and using effective media

This means that a dietitian ...

- has an extensive knowledge and critical understanding of effective educational methods and pedagogy to influence the behaviour of individuals and groups, as well as students and other professionals
- uses educational techniques to empower patients/clients, students, professionals and other people to identify their potential and seek out opportunities to improve nutritional health and reduce inequalities
- ensures that individuals are encouraged and supported, wherever possible, to be self-sufficient in managing their own educational or health related needs
- facilitates learning in practice, mentoring and coaching to promote a positive learning environment for students and other relevant professionals.
- is able to perform a systematic literature review to critically appraise current evidence and synthesize an informed strategy, to teach best practice for a specific dietetic question
- creates a culture of challenge and support where critical feedback is received positively and mistakes are regarded as learning opportunities
- provides positive critical feedback, coaches team members to enhance their performance and clarify their roles and responsibilities
- initiates, manages and demonstrates exemplary supervisory skills within dietetic practice and supports the development of supervision skills in others (students, colleagues and other professionals)

5. Helping students get the best from their practice placements: A Royal College of Nursing toolkit stated by Royal College of Nursing (2006):

- contribute to a supportive learning environment and quality learning outcomes for students;
- be approachable, supportive and aware of how students learn best;
- have knowledge and information of the student’s programme of study and practice assessment tools;
- be willing to share their knowledge of patient care;
- identify specific learning opportunities that are available within the placement area;
- ensure that the learning experience is a planned process;
- ensure that time is identified for initial interviews with students in order to assess learning needs and develop a learning agreement or log;
- identify with students their core competencies and outcomes to be achieved make time to observe students undertaking new skills for the first time and practising newly learnt skills;
- encourage the application of enquiry-based learning and problem-solving to situations, as well as giving factual information;
- build into learning opportunities the chance to experience the skills and knowledge of other specialist practitioners;
- build into the daily routine adequate break times to enable students to enjoy the whole practice learning experience;
- offer encouragement to students and work in partnership with the multi-disciplinary team in order to provide holistic care;
- provide time for reflection, feedback and monitoring of students’ progress;
- ensure that students have constructive feedback, with suggestions on how to make further improvements to promote progress;
- seek evaluative feedback from students at the end of their practice placement experience;
- be willing to take pride in sharing the student’s journey on the path to becoming a registered nurse or midwife.

6. Minimum requirements for guidance during in-service training by Ordinance of the Federal Minister for Health and Women on Bachelor Courses providing Education for Higher Clinical-Technical Professions at Universities of Applied Sciences, Austria.

Article 6: In practical in-service training pursuant to Annexes 10 to 16, guidance shall be provided by competent subject specialists who:

1. have at least one year of specialised professional experience in a professional field relevant for the in-service training in question, and

2. are suitable in pedagogical terms.