



## **A discussion paper: How does EFAD want to understand professional practice and professional development?**

**Developed by EFADs' Professional Practice Committee<sup>1</sup>**

*EFAD wants to serve its members by facilitating communication and collaboration among dietetic professionals in different European countries. For this purpose there is a need to develop a common understanding of related concepts.*

*In February 2011, EFAD adopted the fundamental concept of Professional Practice as proposed by the PPC.*

**Professional practice** concerns the way professionals apply their specific expertise to particular cases and reversely use their experiences systematically to build their expertise. Professional practices are characterized by;

- integrity,
- competence,
- and accountability.

### **Starting point and European environment**

Since the establishment of EFAD in 1978 many initiatives have taken place to support the development of dietetic professional practices in Europe. EFAD has performed several surveys to describe the role, the recognition, the organizational structure, and training programmes of the dietetic profession in different countries in Europe.

To support the member associations developing professional practice, EFAD has developed several important documents:

- Revised definition of Dietitian - Dietitians in Europe Definition, Profession and Education (adopted in 2016);
- Revised Dietetic Competence and the 6 Domains of Competency (adopted in 2016) and European Dietetic Advanced Competences (EDAC) providing each the competences expected from dietitians at the entry into the profession and at advanced/ specialist level (adopted in 2012);

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<sup>1</sup> 2011: Jolein Iestra (Chair), Pauline Douglas, Ylva Orrevall, and Constantina Papoutsakis; 2018: Constantina Papoutsakis (Chair), Ylva Orrevall, Claudia Bolleurs, Lene Thoresen, Naomi Trostler, Ana Catarina Moreira.

- International Code of Ethics and Code of Good Practice (adopted in 2008) and Supplementary document - Recommendations of PPC on how to further improve the current EFAD Code of Ethics (2014);
- European Academic and Practitioner Standards – *Benchmark Statement*, (first published in 2005, updated in 2009, 2018);
- European Pedagogic Standards for Practice Placement (adopted in 2013);
- European Practice Placement Standards for Dietetics (adopted in 2010);

These initiatives have helped promote the development of dietetic professional practices and provided a solid basis to build on. But the job is not yet finished. Taking the three key pillars of professional practice as integrity, competence and accountability (see box above) there is still a *variation* between countries and settings. This offers challenges and opportunities to learn and support each other to continue to raise the level of professional practice within Europe.

There are also external challenges the growing body of scientific medical knowledge, demographic shifts, increasing pressures on limited resources, health inequalities, renewed societal attention for safety and sustainability, nutrigenetics, changing market forces, recent refugee migration and ongoing processes of division of labour and globalization. These changes bring new challenges to dietetic professionals. New structures, competing values, and new forms of governance require compatible responses from professional associations. In this process effective communication of experiences between members and collaboration to develop strategies with common priorities is highly important. How can the EFAD and the PPC best support the member associations in doing so?

### **Tasks and boundaries for the PPC**

EFAD has an obligation of accountability towards its members as described in the articles. But EFAD acts in an advisory capacity regarding the quality of professional practices of its member associations Europe wide. EFAD's focus is also on advocating for the profession in Europe and internationally.

EFAD will do this through achieving its objectives (1-3) as stated in the Strategic Plan (2017-2021):

1. To build European-level cooperation between stakeholders who promote nutrition and dietetics.
2. To continually enhance the profession by taking an approach that is flexible, innovative and can be experimental.
3. To develop a system which encourages exchange of knowledge in Europe and leads to the sustainability of EFAD.

The General Meeting of National Dietetic Association's members has, through its Executive Committee, delegated tasks to four standing committees<sup>2</sup>. In the Table that follows, we propose the tasks and priorities of the PPC:

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<sup>2</sup> The Research and Evidence-based practice Committee, The Education and Life Long Learning Committee, The Professional Practice Committee and The Business and Finance Committee.

## Tasks and priorities of Professional Practice Committee

### The PPC Mission is to;

Support EFAD National Dietetic Associations to enhance the professional practice of its members thereby safeguarding safety and welfare of dietetic service users and building societal trust in the dietetic profession.

We want to achieve this by

- working together to define best practices to maintain the integrity of the profession
- promoting and facilitating the use of the nutritional/dietetic care processes and standardized languages
- sharing norms on professional quality (competence)
- monitoring performance levels within Europe of professional practice and supporting improvement
- prioritizing areas for development of the profession as a whole to ensure accountability and safe dietetic practice.

### Core values

In supporting the values of EFAD (to be democratic, transparent and inclusive, independent and ethical, discerning and open to new ideas and approaches, credible, objective, and honest, an effective communicator, supportive of opportunity, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, respectful of the values that members hold and their capabilities, a partner with clients, colleagues and others, and active in pursuing excellence), the PPC core values to advance the profession are:

1. Primacy of patients/clients safety and welfare
2. Responsibility & accountability of profession(al)
3. Quality of services:
  - Ethical quality: honesty and trust, patient/client autonomy
  - Scientific and technical quality: 'state of the art' knowledge and methodology, competence
  - Social quality: respectful relationships, respecting cultural differences
  - Legal: pursuing social justice and in accordance with prevailing directives
  - Economic: efficient use of resources

### Tasks

- To support the Executive Committee in developing policies related to professional practice by performing monitoring activities such as surveys on professional practices Europe wide
- To support EFAD members in facilitating communication on issues related to intrinsic strategies for professional development by signalling new initiatives, providing tools, and best practice descriptions.
- To liaise with other Committees of EFAD to ensure a seamless and transparent approach to effective use of resources and implementation of initiatives.

### Priorities

1. Prepare and maintain a strategy document on how the PPC will support NDA's to develop professional practice (this document).
2. Investigate observed opportunities and barriers related to use of Standardized Language by all member associations:
  - a. Establish a task force on standardized language (SL) to
    - inform members on current European initiatives and experiences related to SL and
    - guarantee European input to ongoing revisions of major SLs such as the Nutrition Care Process Terminology (NCPT) ([www.ncpro.org](http://www.ncpro.org)); formerly known as the International Dietetics and Nutrition Terminology; IDNT) and ICF-Dietetics (<https://www.nvdietist.nl/>), and initiatives that pertain to international and interdisciplinary applications of dietetic SL such as mapping of SL into larger

- electronic language structures (for example SNOMED-CT ((Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine - Clinical Terms))
  - support discussion with member associations on pros and cons of adopting SL
  - design and implement a strategy to address barriers for implementation of standardised professional terminology for dietetic practices in Europe
  - evaluate the current application of SL in countries by professionals and HEI's;
- 3. Prepare a paper for Executive Committee to facilitate a shared understanding and open discussion on the needs, views and practices of member associations as professional regulatory bodies in order to identify the problems and priorities related to:
  - national legislation and regulatory mechanisms and requirements (professional closure, licensure, registration and accreditation)
  - practices and visions related to specialisation, differentiation, educational levels in relation to dietetic practices and new working fields for dietitians
  - availability of professional standards, adherence practices and procedures to monitor and enforce adherence
  - strategies for extrinsic professional development (directed towards maintenance or advancement of social position and political affairs)
  - Strategies for intrinsic professional development (directed towards development of the professional knowledgebase, professional standards, codes and guidelines, facilities of lifelong learning etc.);
- 4. Be involved at a policy level writing a policy paper about the Professional Card of Dietitians to be disseminate to EFAD stakeholders, analyzing data, establish recommendations, setting out the role and responsibilities of professionals, assess feasibility and implication of recommendations.
- 5. Monitor pertinent European directives and developments of other professions (in collaboration with other committees of EFAD);
- 6. Analyse cost benefit/efficiency of Dietitians interventions and support an increased emphasis towards prevention approaches vs treatment.

## Publications

Several documents developed by PPC have been recently published to assist member associations in developing professional practice, and all can be accessed at the [EFAD website](#).

- The Ethics of Nutrigenomics (2018)
- Roadmap to a Regulated Profession (2017);
- EFAD Code of Ethics Supplementary document - Recommendations of PPC on how to further improve the current EFAD Code of Ethics (2014);
- NCP Vision paper: The implementation of a Nutrition Care Process (NCP) and Standardized Language (SL) among dietitians in Europe (2014);
- The use of a standardized language among dietitians in Europe, based on Report on Knowledge and Use of a Nutrition Care Process & Standardised Language by Dietitians in Europe (2012).