

Prescribing capacity of Practicing Nutritionists

Practicing Nutritionists are degree holding tertiary qualified clinically trained nutrition professionals whom are full members of AARPN, that consult in ‘clinical nutrition therapy’ (termed Nutrition Practice, see AARPN definitions www.aarpn.com) either independently or collectively in a personalised manner, or as a part of a wider public health activity or initiative in partnership with general and allied health practitioners, in the best interest of the client and/or community. Clinical nutrition therapy has also been known as Clinical Nutrition and Nutritional Medicine. The provision of these nutrition interventions is within the scope of dietary services and includes prescribed dietary modifications and dietary supplementation, and recommendations on physical activity that support nutritional outcomes. As a listed profession in the THERAPEUTIC GOODS ACT 1989 - SECT 42AA 1(c), (http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/tga1989191/s42aa.html), Nutritionists are recognised as Health Professionals for the purposes of the THERAPEUTIC GOODS ACT and clinically trained Nutritionists that are members of a listed Schedule 1 organisation, are industry recognised to purchase, prescribe and supply high quality ‘practitioner only’ nutritional supplements in their private practice.

At bachelor’s degree level, Practicing Nutritionists are clinically trained to examine, assess, independently prescribe, treat, monitor and refer, in direct consultation with the public (see Practicing Nutritionist Competency document www.aarpn.com for details of the elements and performance criteria of each competency). These Practicing Nutritionist competencies are shown in Table 1 alongside their corresponding National Prescribing Service (NPS) Prescribing Competency Code.

Table 1: Practicing Nutritionist competencies taught and assessed at bachelor’s degree level mapped with NPS Prescribing Competencies

No.	Competency	HLT Legacy code	NPS Prescribing Competency
1	Contribute to effective workplace relationships	BSBFLM303C (BSBFLM303)	H2
2	Reflect on and improve own professional practice	CHCORG428A (CHCPRP003)	H1
3	Confirm physical health status	HLTAP401B (HLTAAP002)	CA1, CA2
4	Analyse health information	HLTAP501C (HLTAAP003)	CA1, CA2, CA3, CA5
5	Communicate effectively with clients	HLTCOM404C (CHCCOM006)	CA1, H2
6	Make referrals to other health care professionals when appropriate	HLTCOM406C (CHCPRP005)	CA4, CA5, H2
7	Develop professional expertise	HLTCOM502C	H1
8	Manage a practice	HLTCOM503D	H1
9	Apply first aid	HLTFA311A (HLTAID003)	H1
10	Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers	HLHIR403C (CHCDIV001)	H2
11	Work effectively with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	HLHIR404D (CHCDIV002)	H2
12	Maintain an effective health work environment	HLHIR501C	H1
13	Comply with infection control policies and procedures	HLTIN301C (HLTINF001)	H1
14	Manage the control of infection	HLTIN504D (HLTINF004)	H1
15	Apply literature research findings to clinical practice	HLTNUT601C	CA1, CA2
16	Apply a nutritional medicine diagnostic framework	HLTNUT603B	CA1, CA2
17	Manage Work within a clinical nutritional framework	HLTNUT604C	CA4, H1, H2
18	Perform nutritional medicine health assessment	HLTNUT605B	CA1, CA2
19	Plan the nutritional treatment strategy	HLTNUT606B	CA2, CA3, CA4, CA5, H1, H2
20	Provide nutritional medicine treatment	HLTNUT607C	CA2, CA3, CA5, H2
21	Provide specialised nutritional medicine treatment	HLTNUT608B	CA1, CA2, CA3, CA5
22	Prepare and dispense nutritional and dietary supplements	HLTNUT609C	CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, H1
23	Provide basic dietary advice	HLTNUT610B	CA1, CA2, CA3, H2
24	Contribute to WHS processes	HLTWHS300A (HLTWHS001)	H1

Table 2 below maps the NPS Prescribing Competencies to Practicing Nutritionist Competencies.

Table 2: Mapping of NPS Prescribing Competencies to Practicing Nutritionist Competencies

NPS Competency Code	NPS Prescribing Competency	Practicing Nutritionist Competency No. (See Table 1)	Practicing Nutritionist competencies appear to map completely with NPS Prescribing Competency and performance criteria
Horizontal Competency Area 1 (H1)	Practices professionally	2, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 24	YES
Competency Area 1 (CA1)	Understands the person and their clinical needs	3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23	YES
Competency Area 2 (CA2)	Understands the treatment options and how they support the person's clinical needs	3, 4, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23	YES
Competency Area 3 (CA3)	Works in partnership with the person to develop and implement a treatment plan	4, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23	YES
Competency Area 4 (CA4)	Communicates the treatment plan clearly to other health professionals	6, 17, 19, 22	YES, for dietary modification, nutritional supplements, and relevant medicines
Competency Area 5 (CA5)	Monitors and reviews the person's response to treatment	4, 6, 19, 20, 21	YES
Horizontal Competency Area 2 (H2)	Communicates and collaborates effectively with the person and other health professionals	1, 5, 10, 11, 17, 19, 23	YES

As can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2, collectively, the competencies held by Practicing Nutritionists have excellent alignment with the National Prescribing Service (NPS) 'Competencies Required to Prescribe Medicines' (see below for chart of NPS Prescribing Competencies), confirming the capacity of Practicing Nutritionists to autonomously prescribe nutrition based interventions direct to the public.

National Prescribing Service (NPS) Prescribing Competencies

National Prescribing Service (NPS). (2012). Competencies required to prescribe medicines. National Prescribing Service Ltd. Available from: https://www.nps.org.au/assets/682949fec05647bc-2c0de122631e-Prescribing_Compencies_Framework.pdf

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Introduction	4	Element 5.1 Obtains information to assess the person's response to treatment	24
Background	4	Element 5.2 Works in partnership with the person and other health professionals to address issues arising from the review	25
Project governance	4	Knowledge	25
The framework development process	4	Skills	25
The National Medicines Policy and the quality use of medicines	4	Behaviours	25
What this framework is designed to do	4	Horizontal Competency Area H1: Practices professionally	26
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The structure of the competencies	6	Element H1.2 Practices according to professional standards, codes of conduct, and within the health professional's own scope of practice	27
Definition of terms	8	Element H1.3 Practices within the applicable frameworks of the healthcare setting and system	27
Descriptors for levels of Knowledge, skills and behaviours	9	Element H1.4 Practices quality use of medicines principles	27
Competency Area 1: Understands the person and their clinical needs	10	Element H1.5 Demonstrates a commitment to continual quality improvement of the health professional's own prescribing	28
Element 1.1 Establishes a therapeutic partnership with the person and a collaborative relationship with other health professionals	10	Element H1.6 Addresses the potential for bias in prescribing decisions	28
Element 1.2 Performs a comprehensive medicines assessment to obtain information to understand the person's clinical needs and context	10	Knowledge	29
Element 1.3 Generates and explores possible diagnoses	12	Skills	30
Knowledge	12	Behaviours	30
Skills	13	Horizontal Competency Area H2: Communicates and collaborates effectively with the person and other health professionals	31
Behaviours	13	Element H2.1 Obtains consent to provide clinical services to the person	31
Competency Area 2: Understands the treatment options and how they support the person's clinical needs	14	Element H2.2 Acknowledges the person, their family, and carers as integral to care and collaborates to achieve optimal health outcomes	31
Element 2.1 Considers non-pharmacological treatment options suitable for treating the person and their condition	14	Element H2.3 Respects the person	32
Element 2.2 Identifies appropriate medicines options that can be incorporated into the person's treatment plan	14	Element H2.4 Communicates effectively with the person using appropriate communication skills to enable the safe use of medicines	32
Knowledge	16	Element H2.5 Collaborates with other health professionals to achieve optimal health outcomes for the person	32
Skills	16	Knowledge	33
Behaviours	17	Skills	33
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Element 3.1 Negotiates therapeutic goals with the person	18	Appendix 1 Project governance	35
Element 3.2 Works in partnership with the person and other health professionals to select medicines and to tailor and implement a treatment plan	18	Advisory group	35
Element 3.3 Develops a review plan tailored to the person's needs	18	Expert reference group	35
Knowledge	19	Appendix 2 Development process	36
Skills	20	Literature review	36
Behaviours	21	Initial draft development	36
Competency Area 4: Communicates the treatment plan clearly to other health professionals	22	Consultation	36
Element 4.1 Provides clear instructions to other health professionals who dispense, supply, or administer medicines prescribed for the person	22	Face-to-face and written consultations with stakeholder organisations	36
Element 4.2 Provides information about medicines and the treatment plan with the person's consent to other health professionals who provide care to the person	22	Feedback from individuals	36
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