Association for Nutrition
Regulating Professionals – Raising Standards – Improving Health

Consultation Document I

Competency Requirements for entry onto the
UKVRN (Registered Associate Nutritionist - ANutr)

Overview

- This document sets out the proposed updated competency requirements for registration with the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) as a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr). These competencies have been identified as the minimum requirements for registrants to be able to practice safely and effectively.

- All UKVRN registrants (ANutr and RNutr) will be expected to be able to demonstrate competence in each of the ANutr Core Competencies and sub-competencies. These competencies should be read in conjunction with the AfN Independent Practice Competencies for those undertaking independent practice, whether with individuals, groups or businesses.

Proposed Competencies

Core Competency I: Professional Conduct and Practice

CC1a – Demonstrate ethical and professional practice through upholding the AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance, including, but not limited to:

- Identifying and applying the principles of equality, diversity, equity and inclusion (EDEI) that should be fully considered, assessed and applied throughout all areas of practice and activities
- Working within your own scope of practice, appreciating the limits of your skills and knowledge, being aware of independent practice competencies
- Applying the scientific principles learnt through your education and continuing professional development (CPD) to your practice and public activities

CC1b – Applying appropriate communication skills throughout all areas of practice, by:

- Establishing appropriate professional relationships, working effectively as part of a team or in collaboration with others
- Respecting and reflecting the balance of the scientific evidence which underpins your practice and activities, enabling informed choices about nutrition
- Presenting nutritional science information to a range of audiences in a suitable format across different communication media
- Checking that the information you have provided is accurate and has been understood correctly, including when communicated in different languages

CC1c – Regular development of professional practice and competence, demonstrated by:

- Planning, undertaking, and keeping records of relevant CPD, demonstrating learning through reflective practice
- Identifying opportunities to access evidence, understanding the importance of keeping up to date with relevant developments in your field of practice
- Identifying and upholding best practice standards, legislation, official guidelines, policies and protocols, assessing risk, evaluating and adapting own practice
- Understanding and describing the importance of mentorship to the development of your practice and the profession, including peer-to-peer and RNutr-to-ANutr

Proposed Competencies

Core Competency II: Science and Research Skills

As a UKVRN Registered Associate Nutritionist, you should be able to:

Use your knowledge and understanding to:

CC2a – List and outline the human/animal body functions pertinent to nutritional science

CC2b – Describe the process of digestion, absorption, transportation and storage of nutrients and non-nutrient components of foods or feeds

CC2c – Define what nutrients are and how they are used by the body, explaining how to assess nutritional status and the consequences of nutrient deficiency

CC2d – Describe the relationship between different metabolic pathways, how they work together to meet the bodies demand for nutrients, and how nutritional needs change with age, sex, physical activity and lifestyle, etc., in human or animal systems

CC2e – Explain the nature of common conditions that require dietary manipulation or can affect physical activity, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and cancer

CC2f – Summarise the general principles underpinning, and strengths and limitations of, common methods of assessment of nutritional status including clinical, anthropometric, dietary, biochemical, physiological, and functional methods

Practically apply your knowledge and understanding to:

CC2g – Describe and apply appropriate methods required to accurately assess, measure and/or report on estimation of energy balance; energy expenditure; body mass; body composition; how body mass and energy balance are controlled

CC2h – Explain the hierarchy of evidence, recognising strengths, weaknesses and limitations of different study designs and research methods to critically analyse research outcomes and evaluations, including emerging and developing areas of research

CC2i – Plan, conduct, analyse and report on nutrition research, carrying out sample selection in accordance with the basic principles of good research practice

CC2j – Obtain and report nutrition-related data using qualitative, quantitative and statistical research methods using appropriate study design

Proposed Competencies

Core Competency III: Food Systems

As a UKVRN Registered Associate Nutritionist, you should be able to:

CC3a – Identify staple foods, main sources of key nutrients and novel foods for different population groups

CC3b – Explain how the following affect the chemical composition and nutritional quality of food/feed and diet:

- Agricultural, production and transportation methods
- Preparation, preservation, additives, fortification
- Sources of food or feed supply
- Methods of cooking, such as boiling, steaming, frying, etc., and storage
- The food matrix

CC3c – Describe the role of nutrition in sustainability, recognising national and international frameworks and terminology, and outlining associated issues, including environmental, societal, educational, financial and political challenges to sustainable diets, food systems and supply chains

CC3d – Identify and explain the role nutrients and non-nutrient components of foods/feeds and drinks can have on diet and health, including drug-nutrient and nutrient-nutrient interactions

CC3e – Locate and access official guidance on the regulation of nutrition and health claims and understand how these apply in practice to labelling, communications/marketing and nutrition professionals

CC3f – Describe, and develop practical skills in, the methods used to analyse and modify food composition

CC3g – Analyse and calculate the nutrient content of foods/feeds and diets of an individual or group, justifying your chosen method of dietary assessment

Proposed Competencies

Core Competency IV: Social and Behaviour

As a UKVRN Registered Associate Nutritionist, you should be able to:

Use your knowledge and understanding to:

CC4a – Describe the factors that affect diet and nutritional needs, intake and practices, including the importance of religious and cultural beliefs, financial/social, geographical, and environmental factors

CC4b – Explain the importance of big data and how it can be used to reveal patterns, trends and associations, and drive change

CC4c – Describe how individual and population dietary patterns and preferences can change over time, identifying the difference between trends and dietary requirements

Practically apply your knowledge and understanding to:

CC4d - Understand behaviour change theories and how they can be used to improve health, applying this to the design, implementation and evaluation of a nutritional intervention

CC4e – Describe and apply theories of nutrition health education and promotion to public health messages

CC4f – Design a diet that meets the specific needs of an individual, or group, considering factors such as age, sex, religion, culture, socio-economic background and physical activity

CC4g – Describe the methods used to measure dietary, nutrient and activity patterns of individuals, the general population, and population sub-groups, and be able to extract and report on data that can be collected from these

Proposed Competencies

Core Competency V: Health and Wellbeing

As a UKVRN Registered Associate Nutritionist, you should be able to:

Use your knowledge and understanding to:

CC5a – Describe the scientific basis for the measurement and estimation of nutritional requirements and identify and report dietary reference values for the general population and population sub-groups

CC5b – Summarise the general principles and methods associated with determining the efficacy, health attributes, health claims, safety, and legal aspects of foods/feeds, drinks and supplements

CC5c – Describe the relationship between diet and:
- Mental health
- Physical activity
- Life stage
- Disease

Practically apply your knowledge and understanding to:

CC5d – Identify and apply methods to review population intakes, interventions or policies, explaining the significance of evaluation in relation to setting, maintaining and driving public health agendas

CC5e – Combine information from a variety of sources to identify or propose solutions to improve either human health, diet quality, animal welfare, productivity, food production or sustainability

CC5f – Explain and promote the role and importance of food and nutrition literacy at an individual and population level

Consultation Questions

1. How easy to you find these to understand?

2. Do you think these need to be made clearer? If so, please state which point(s) and how this should be made clearer?

3. Do you agree with the proposed new layout, i.e. splitting each core competency into knowledge and understanding, and practical application (e.g., 'knows how/shows how')? Please explain why.

4. Do any ANutr skills and knowledge gaps remain that are not covered when read together with the AfN Independent Practice Competencies? If yes, please explain what gaps remain, why, and how this could be addressed.

5. Do you feel the competencies provide new graduates with a sufficient foundation in nutrition science to safely practice in a graduate entry-level role? Please explain why.

6. What would you consider a suitable time period for these ANutr competencies to be implemented for the assessment of new applicants to the register?
   - >12 – <18 months
   - >18 – <24 months
   - >24 – <36 months
   - Other?: Please specify

7. What specific term(s) do you think should be defined within the glossary of terms?

8. What specific point(s) do you think should be covered within the supporting guidance documents?
   - For individuals to achieve the competencies
   - For assessors to assess achievement of the competencies
   - For universities to deliver the competencies

9. Do you have any additional comments or feedback on the proposed ANutr competencies?