



Association  
for Nutrition

Regulating Professionals – Raising Standards – Improving Health

# Consultation Document III



Competency Requirements for registrants  
undertaking independent/freelance practice



## Overview

- An increasing number of registrants are working in an independent/freelance capacity. A number of additional competencies have been identified as being required to provide protection for the public, for those working in a freelance capacity. This document sets out the proposed competency requirements for registrants working in independent practice. These competencies have been identified as the minimum requirements for all UKVRN registrants (ANutr and RNutr) to practice safely, ethically and effectively, while working in independent practice.
- All AfN registrants working in independent practice are currently expected to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge required to do so, while upholding the AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance, and working within their individual scope of practice. Under the new proposals, to be identified as being safe and competent to practice in an independent/freelance capacity, registrants will be required to demonstrate their achievement of the AfN Independent Practice Competencies.



# Proposed Competencies

## Independent Practice Competencies: Legal

As a UKVRN Registrant working in independent practice, you should be able to:

IP1: Demonstrate safe and professional practice through understanding and adhering to legal requirements and procedures, including, but not limited to:

- Creating appropriate business policies and procedures for the gathering and storage of data, privacy, and complaints, adhering to relevant regulations
- Designing business contracts, and being aware of legal documents such as non-disclosure agreements, understanding the implications of signing such documents and identifying when you should seek professional legal support
- Holding appropriate insurance, understanding business, liability and legal risks involved in providing advice or services



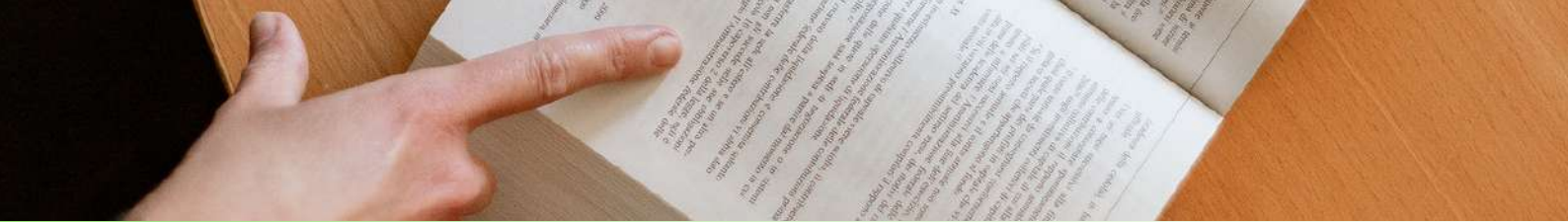
# Proposed Competencies

## Independent Practice Competencies: Communication and Consultation Skills

As a UKVRN Registrant working in independent practice, you should be able to:

IP2: Conduct client and business consultations and communications professionally and ethically, by:

- Using language and communication styles appropriate to business setting and platform
- Marketing your services appropriately, professionally, and ethically in line with AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance
- Designing and planning appropriate consultations, including structure, required paperwork, resource provision and appropriate software, platforms and technology
- Managing client expectations from initial communications through to activity end
- Establishing appropriate professional networks to allow for collaboration and onward referrals, understanding which clients you can provide services to and who to refer to when work is outside own scope of practice or supervision is required
- Using appropriate behavioural change methods and interpersonal skills, e.g. active listening, recognising when adaptation is necessary to overcome barriers
- Supporting clients to set realistic goals, e.g. by using the SMART method, measuring progress effectively and adapting when necessary



# Proposed Competencies

## Independent Practice Competencies: Reflection, Evaluation and Support

As a UKVRN Registrant working in independent practice, you should be able to:

IP3: Demonstrate regular reflection, evaluation and development of professional practice and competence, by:

- Applying reflective practice to your business activities, auditing and amending own practice to improve output
- Establishing appropriate support systems, whether RNutr to ANutr mentorship, or RNutr to RNutr peer support, understanding the importance of support for development at all career stages and experience levels



# Consultation Questions

The questions we will be asking on the Independent Practice Competencies are:

1. How easy do you find these to understand?
2. Do you think these need to be made clearer? If so, please state which point and how this should be made clearer?
3. Do you feel there are any gaps in the AfN Independent Practice Competencies? If yes, please explain what gaps remain, why, and how these could be addressed.
4. Referring to the accompanying guidance document, do you agree with our proposals for assessment (via either an AfN Accredited Degree or Endorsed CPD)? If not, please explain why not and how this should be assessed?
5. Regarding assessment of an applicant's achievement of the independent standards through CPD (detailed in consultation document). Do you feel this is an appropriate assessment method? If not, please explain why and how this should be assessed instead.
6. With regards to current registrants already undertaking independent practice, should there be a defined period of time given for achievement of, and compliance with, the Independent Practice Competencies to be demonstrated via a declaration of compliance? If no please explain why and how this should be assessed instead.
7. What do you feel is an appropriate time period?
  - <6 months
  - >6 - <12 months
  - >12 – <18 months
  - Other
8. When a registrant has demonstrated achievement of the independent practice standards, how should this best be recognised by AfN for the public/employers?
  - As a statement on the registrant's record on the AfN website
  - A requirement for 'Takes clients' to state yes
  - Within the registrants professional title/post-nominal letters
  - Other?: Please explain



# Consultation Questions

The questions we will be asking on the Independent Practice Competencies are:

9. Are there any specific term(s) related to independent practice that you think should be defined within the glossary of terms?

10. If you are teaching on an AfN-accredited degree program, is this an area that is already covered within your current programme's curriculum?

- Yes, current students would be able to achieve ALL the proposed independent practice competencies
- Partially, and we would be likely to offer cover of all competencies in the future
- Partially, but it is NOT likely we would expand our teaching to cover all of the competencies
- No, but it IS something we would be likely to offer in the future
- No, and it is NOT something we would be likely to offer in the future

If you would be likely to include in future, within what timescale would you expect to be able to offer this?

11. How easy or difficult do you think this will be to deliver within a university setting? Please explain.

12. What specific points do you think should be covered within the guidance documents?

- For individuals to achieve the competencies
- For assessors to assess achievement of the competencies
- For universities to deliver the competencies

13. Do you have any additional comments or feedback on the proposed AfN Independent Practice Competencies?