



Consultation Document V



Consultation Questions:
Responses to be submitted via online collector



Overview

- AfN is the independent regulator for Registered Nutritionists. As a registered charity our role is to protect and benefit the public. We hold the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN), a register of competent, qualified nutrition professionals who meet our rigorously applied standards for scientifically sound evidence-based nutrition and its use in practice. Our registrants must develop, demonstrate and maintain the competencies needed to practice safely and effectively. We accredit degree programmes which meet our standards so that their graduates demonstrate the core competencies for registration as a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr). ANutr registrants undertake further activities to develop the further competencies required for registration as a Registered Nutritionist (RNutr).
- We periodically review our competencies and standards to ensure that they reflect any developments in the environment. This consultation is about the proposed amendments to both our core competencies and our standards for accreditation. Responses are submitted via the online collector. Responses can be saved and continued later, if you do not wish to submit your response in one go.



Consultation Questions

We ask certain questions to help make sure that our policy making is representative and to understand how it may affect certain groups.

1. Please can you tell us if you are responding as:

- A UKVRN registrant (ANutr)
- A UKVRN registrant (RNutr)
- A UKVRN Registration Assessor
- A member of the public
- A statutory regulated health professional (RD, MD, RN, etc.)
- A training provider, including HEIs (non-AfN-accredited degree)
- A lecturer on an AfN-accredited degree program
- An employer
- A professional organisation
- Other

2. How long have you been a registrant on the UKVRN? (For ANutrs/RNutrs only)

- Less than 18 months
- Between 18 months and 3 years
- Between 3-5 years
- More than 5 years

3. What specialist area(s) of practice do you hold on the UKVRN? (For RNutrs only)

- Animal
- Food
- Nutrition Science
- Public Health
- Sport and Exercise
- Healthcare (medical)

4. Do you have a qualification in nutrition science?

- Yes (go to Q7)
- No (go to Q5)



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5. What is the highest level of education you have completed in nutrition science?

- GCSE
- Certificate or Diploma (below degree level)
- A-Level / IB
- BSc,
- PGCert,
- PGDip,
- MSc,
- PhD,
- prefer not to say

6. Year of completion / graduation

7. What best describes your area of work/sector? (e.g. charity, academia, food industry, policy, freelance)

8. Please specify which organisation you are responding on behalf of (Responding as employer or professional organisation only)

ANutr Competencies

The proposed updated competency requirements for registration with the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) as a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr) detail the competencies that 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.

9. How easy to you find these to understand?

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



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11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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

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

16. 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

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



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RNutr Competencies

The proposed updated competency requirements for registration with the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) as a Registered Nutritionist (RNutr) that have been identified as the minimum requirements for progression to RNutr level, demonstrating proficient practice, which is safe, effective and evidence-based.

All UKVRN Registered Nutritionists (RNutr) will be expected to be able to demonstrate competence in all ANutr Competencies, plus the RNutr Competencies, including those specific to their specialist area of practice (Animal, Food, Healthcare-Medical, Nutrition Science, Public Health or Sports & Exercise). These competencies should be read in conjunction with the AfN Independent Practice Competencies for those undertaking independent practice, whether with individuals, groups or businesses.

18. How easy to you find these to understand?

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

20. 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.

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

22. Do the RNutr competencies demonstrate a progression from ANutr in nutrition expertise? Please explain why.

23. What would you consider a suitable time period for these RNutr competencies to be implemented for the assessment of new applicants to the register and for ANutr to RNutr transfers?

- <6 months
- >6 - <12 months
- >12 – <18 months
- >18 – <24 months
- >24 – <36 months
- Other?: Please specify



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

25. 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

26. Do you have any additional comments or feedback on the proposed RNutr competencies?

Independent Practice Competencies

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. The proposed competency requirements for registrants working in independent/freelance practice 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.

27. How easy to you find these to understand?

28. Do you think there are any aspects of these that need to be made clearer? If so, please state which point(s) and how this should be made clearer?

29. Do you feel there are any gaps in the AfN Independent Practice Competencies? If yes, please explain what gaps remain, why, and how this could be addressed.

30. Referring to the accompanying guidance document, do you agree with our proposals for assessment (via either an AfN Accredited Degree or Endorsed CPD)? If no, please explain why not and how this should be assessed instead.



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31. 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 no, please explain why not and how this should be assessed instead.

32. 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 not and how this should be assessed instead.

33. What do you feel is an appropriate time period?

- <6 months
- >6 - <12 months
- >12 – <18 months
- Other?: Please specify

34. 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 searchable Register on the AfN website
- A requirement for 'Takes clients' to state yes on the registrant's record on the searchable Register on the AfN website
- Within the registrant's professional title / post-nominal letters
- Other

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

36. 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 likely to cover in future, within what timescale would you expect to be able to offer this?



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37. How easy or difficult do you think this will be to deliver within a university setting? Why?

38. 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

39. Do you have any additional comments or feedback on the proposed Independent Practice competencies?

Degree Accreditation Standards

Proposed Standard 1 - Professionalism and Ethics

S1a - There must be transparent, robust and effective systems embedded within the institution to ensure compliance with AfN professional ethics, codes of academic conduct and health and safety guidelines. A fitness to practice policy is required.

S1b - Students must have effective support for wellbeing, academic conduct and employability.

40. Do you agree or disagree that institutions should have a fitness to practice policy in place for students? Please explain

41. Do you agree or disagree that employability should be added to the standard? Please explain

Proposed Standard 2 - Admission of Students

S2a - Recruitment, selection and admission of students for entry to undergraduate or postgraduate programmes must be clear and appropriate to the programme.

S2b - Students must demonstrate sufficient capability to study in the language used for delivery and assessment of the programme. For International students studying in English, this must be not less than 6.5 IELTS (or equivalent), with no individual section less than 6.0.

42. Do you agree or disagree that programmes should set entry criteria which are appropriate to the programme? Please explain



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43. Do you agree or disagree that the minimum IELTS standard should be retained? Please explain

Proposed Standard 3 - Curriculum Delivery and Assessment

S3a - Core Competencies must be delivered and assessed within validated programme modules. The Core Competencies should be fully embedded within modules and be delivered and assessed in an integrated and progressive manner, demonstrating good pedagogy.

S3b - Students must pass every formal component of summative assessment in the core modules containing assessments of Core Competencies. The core modules containing assessments of Core Competencies must not be subject to compensation, trailing or extended resit opportunities.

S3c - An AfN Accredited programme must be delivered in an environment which is informed by appropriate research and evidence-based nutrition practice. Students should experience a balance of taught components, directed study and independent learning, with a strong focus on critical analysis, evaluation and evidence-based practice.

S3d - Where core competencies are gained by students through study at another institution, the programme provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how those competencies are delivered and assessed to the same standards as for the rest of their programme.

44. Do you agree that the proposed Standard 3 will ensure that graduates of accredited programmes have achieved the core competencies? Please explain

Proposed Standard 4 – Management of Quality and Resources

S4a - There must be policies and systems in place to ensure the quality of education and assessment is monitored and evaluated, and action taken to address concerns.

S4b - There must be a minimum of two FTE AfN Registered Nutritionists involved in delivering and assessing the Core Competencies for each programme. Staff who are leading or teaching substantial parts of modules which deliver core competencies should be Registered Nutritionists or Registered Associate Nutritionists. One external examiner must be an AfN Registered Nutritionist.

S4c - There must be sufficient and relevant teaching and learning resources in place to deliver and assess the programme in its entirety.

45. Are the requirements for management of quality and resources set out in the proposed standards clear? Please explain



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46. Are the requirements for management of quality and resources set out in the proposed standards unambiguous? Please explain

47. Are the requirements for management of quality and resources set out in the proposed standards proportionate?

48. Should AfN set more specific requirements for teaching and learning resources? If so, what do you feel should be included?

Proposed Standard 5 – Leadership and Staffing

S5a - There must be AfN Registered Nutritionists involved in the leadership of the programme, who should take a role in ensuring that staff delivering the programme maintain their knowledge and skills in respect of the Core Competencies.

S5b - There must be sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff from relevant disciplines to deliver and assess the Core Competency requirements.

49. Do you agree that there must be an AfN Registered Nutritionist involved in the leadership of accredited programmes? Please explain

General Questions About The Proposed Degree Accreditation Standards

50. Do you think we should have different standards for Level 6 and Level 7 programmes? Please explain

51. Do you consider that the revised Accreditation Standards for Degree Programmes will be fit for purpose for the next five years? Please explain

52. How much time do you think will be needed for accredited programmes to incorporate the revised core competencies and make any changes necessary to meet our revised standards?

53. Do you have any other comments on the Accreditation Standards for Degree Programmes?



Consultation Questions

General Questions About The Proposed Degree Accreditation Procedures

54. Is there anything you would like to tell us about our current procedures or any improvements you would like to see? Please explain

55. Would a two-stage process which checks that some essential criteria have been met, prior to a full submission, be helpful?

56. Would an online application and assessment process be helpful?