



Association  
for Nutrition

Regulating Professionals – Raising Standards – Improving Health

# AfN Consultation on ANutr Support Framework

Open until 2359 on 30th September 2022



## Overview

The Association for Nutrition is the independent regulator for Registered Nutritionists. 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. There are two categories of UKVRN registrant: Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr) and Registered Nutritionist (RNutr).

AfN accredits University degree programmes which meet our standards so that their graduates demonstrate the core competencies for registration as ANutr. Over a period of three or more years ANutr registrants undertake further activities to develop the further competencies required for registration as RNutr.

RNutr registrants must be able to demonstrate evidence of knowledge and understanding in the five core competencies in nutrition, plus the practical application of this within a specialist area of practice: Food, Nutrition Science, Public Health, Sports & Exercise, Animal or Healthcare-Medical.



## Responding to this consultation

Thank you for your interest in this consultation. In this paper we set out our proposals for a new framework to support ANutr registrant to progress to their transfer to RNutr status. There are some questions about the proposals which we would like you to answer using the online submission form.

## Becoming a Registered Nutritionist (RNutr)

In order to transfer from ANutr to RNutr, ANutr registrants must develop and demonstrate the competencies required for their chosen specialism. This requires them to have a minimum of three years applying their knowledge and skills in practice, undertaking CPD and becoming proficient. Once they have attained the required competencies they must submit a Transfer Portfolio showing:

- That they have kept their professional knowledge up to date
- How they have developed their nutrition skills and competence through professional experience since graduating
- That they now have demonstrated all the competencies required for their specialism
- That they continue to abide by our Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance in their practice

In May 2021 we surveyed registrants about the challenges faced by ANutr in completing their transfer, and the support which they would find useful.

Challenges included:

- Clarity and access to information
- Lack of confidence and inertia
- Not having a mentor
- Gaining experience
- Cost and suitability of CPD



- Linking CPD to competencies
- Networking and support

Respondents indicated a number of ways AfN could help ANutr navigate their journey from ANutr to RNutr. These included information and guidance about:

- How to develop skills to meet the criteria to become a RNutr
- How to record and reflect on personal development
- How to present evidence in the transfer portfolio

The kinds of information and guidance respondents requested included webinars, workshops, mentors, website guidance, regional talks, specific examples of portfolio records or entries and dedicated transfer training sessions. Respondents also indicated that a better awareness amongst employers and the public about AfN and the UKVRN would be helpful.

## Proposals

Over recent months AfN has convened a working party to develop a support framework with the aim of supporting ANutr registrants to develop and progress to RNutr status. This framework will support AfN's public protection role, through providing more support and structure to ANutr in their early career and will help ANutr to expand and enhance their competence as they progress towards RNutr registration.

Having considered the feedback from our survey and the experiences of working group members we are proposing a framework with three strands, which are:

**STRAND 1** Webinars / Process Support

**STRAND 2** Professional Advisor

**STRAND 3** Portfolio Development



In this paper we outline the proposed Support Framework to facilitate progression and development of an ANutr registrant, during the first few years of their professional life. This process should take place over a minimum of three years, during which an ANutr is gaining experience and undertaking Continual Professional Development (CPD). For some ANutr registrants who may be working part time or on a career break this may take longer, but whether this occurs over three years or a longer period, the ANutr should still be undertaking a minimum of 30 hours CPD per year.

## Elements of the Support Framework

### Webinars and Process Support

It is proposed that AfN will develop a series of webinars, available to registrants via our website. Currently we have identified that webinars would be useful to explain:

- The roles and remit of AfN;
- Core competencies and different specialisms;
- Reflective practice;
- Ethical and professional practice;
- Early career development; and
- Practice management.

To maximise flexibility, the recorded webinars will be available on demand, and supported by live Q&A sessions every few months. ANutr should aim to watch around 4 of these webinars each year and to participate in the live Q&A sessions.



## Questions

1. Do you think that pre-recorded webinars are a suitable medium for disseminating information regarding the process and professional development? Yes/No
  - 1a. *If No, do you think other media could be utilised such as website, booklets, podcasts etc.?*
2. Do you think that the selection of specialist webinars is suitable for ANutr registrants? Yes/No
3. Do you have any other suggestions for specialist webinar topics?

## Professional Advisor

In the new proposed framework, it is highly recommended that all ANutr registrants have a named Professional Advisor. In line with our current requirements, ANutr who are working with individual clients must have a Professional Advisor. This role could be a workplace supervisor or line manager, or another person, but they must be an RNutr or, in some circumstances, a Registered Dietitian (for example, if the ANutr is working in a multidisciplinary team and managed by a registered dietitian).

Some Professional Advisors might undertake this role as part of their normal job role, some might undertake the role as CPD and some might include it in the services they offer as part of their professional practice. AfN will provide guidance about what is expected from the role, but individual arrangements will be a matter for the ANutr and Professional Advisor to agree. The supervision meetings should be quarterly and may be separate from normal supervisory or line management meetings so that they can specifically consider the ANutr's professional development.

The role of the Professional Advisor is to support the development of the ANutr registrant through reflective discussions about work planned and work undertaken, linked to the development of competencies. They can also discuss gaps in knowledge, CPD and scope of practice in line with the



AfN Code of Ethics, Conduct and Performance. Through these discussions, the Professional Advisor is able to advise and support the ANutr with the process of transfer to RNutr, and at least once a year will look at portfolio entries and give formative feedback.

To support the development of this role AfN will provide training and resources for RNutr, and being a professional advisor can count towards the RNutr's CPD requirement. RNutr may choose to indicate on their register entry that they are able to provide professional advisor services to ANutr.

## Questions

4. Do you think that the role of Professional Advisor is suitable for supporting an ANutr through the development and transfer process? Yes/No
5. Do you think that the name Professional Advisor is appropriate to the role as defined? Yes/No
6. Do you think that the role of Professional Advisor is one that an RNutr would want to undertake? Yes/No
- 6a. *Please give reasons for your answer*
7. What sort of training or support would a Professional Advisor require?

## Portfolio Development

One of the challenges identified through feedback has been that ANutr often delay preparing their portfolio, until it becomes an unwieldy task. There are many reasons why this might be, and the webinar series and professional advisor roles are intended to help ANutr feel ready to start recording their experience and CPD earlier in the process, seeing this as a developmental process over three years rather than preparation for final assessment.



As such, we have identified 3 elements to the portfolio development:

- Work Experience
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- The Portfolio

The term work experience has a wide remit and can include paid work, volunteering, internships and postgraduate study, as long as the experience is in the field of nutrition and is covering the core competencies. We are proposing that portfolio development is supported through an online logging facility, which allows ANutr to input 3 to 4 pieces of evidence which demonstrate application of the competencies in practice each year, linked to the RNutr competencies.

CPD has a wide remit and can include webinars, conferences, reflective reading, online forums, public consultations and other professional activities. There should be a minimum of 30 hours of Continuing Professional Development undertaken each year. A CPD logging facility will enable ANutr to record their CPD online with a reflection. ANutr will be encouraged to undertake a range of types of CPD, including CPD which is delivered free of charge. Webinars undertaken as part of the support framework will count towards CPD hours, and the current CPD endorsement scheme will signpost the activities suitable for ANutr development.

In addition to the logging facilities above AfN will provide guidance on writing portfolio entries, webinars for both ANutr and Professional Advisors on the portfolio and transfer process and zoom clinics.

## Other Activities

The ANutr is encouraged to become involved in networking opportunities at either a regional or specialist level and to gradually take on more responsibility so that they can develop professionally and collaboratively with other registrants. AfN will continue to support regional events, and is working with the regional reps to ensure a regular supply of events open to all registrants.



## Questions

8. Do you think that inputting work experience during each year will be helpful to building up the transfer portfolio? Yes/ No
9. Do you agree that the number of hours of CPD for ANutr registrants should be the same as for RNutr registrants (minimum 30 hours per year)? Yes/No
10. Do you consider that the proposed ANutr Support Framework will make it easier for ANutr to transfer to RNutr? Yes/No
- 10a. *Please give reasons for your answer*
11. Do you have any other comments to make on the proposed ANutr Support Framework?
12. In what capacity have you completed this survey? ANutr/RNutr/Registered Dietitian/Member of Public

## Consultation

Thank you for reading this consultation paper. To submit your responses to this please use the online response form.

