



New Zealand Dietitians Board
Te Mana Mātanga Mātai Kai

Information for New Zealand Graduating Students

Introduction

Dietitians are healthcare professionals regulated under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act). To practice as a Dietitian in New Zealand you must be both registered with the Dietitians Board **and** hold an Annual Practising Certificate (APC). The registration process is therefore in two parts:

1. Apply for registration
2. Once you are registered, apply for a practising certificate or make a non-practising declaration

You must be registered and hold a current APC if you intend to practise dietetics in New Zealand (NZ). This applies even if you intend to practise for part of the year, or to work part-time, (even for one day of the practising year!). It also applies to voluntary or other unpaid work.

The Board has a number of resources and a guidance note on understanding registration and holding an annual practising certificate on the website. Please take the time to read these through as it is important you understand the implications of being registered and the need for an APC; you do not want be practising in breach of the HPCA Act at the start of your dietetic career!

You can find the resources under

- Policy & guidelines
- News & publications

Registration

You can apply for registration once you have completed your course of study and handed in your thesis for:

- **Masters of Dietetics from the University of Otago**
- **Master of Science (Nutrition and Dietetics) from Massey University**
- **Master of Health Sciences in Nutrition and Dietetics from Auckland University**

The Registration Application form can be found on the Dietitians Board Website under fees and forms. As a New Zealand graduate you need to use the form titled '**NZ Graduate Registration**'. You also need to complete the current payment form and include it in your application.

An application for registration must contain the following:

- A completed and signed Application for Registration form.
- Application fee - This is non-refundable.
- A character reference. This must be sent by the referee direct to the Dietitians Board. Please give your referee the information sheet for referees attached at the back of the application form, to guide their referee report.

Note: Please do not ask your head of programme to provide a character reference as they will automatically provide a fitness to practice reference when they confirm successful course completion.

- Correctly **certified copy** of birth certificate or passport and certified copy of evidence of name change if other documentation for your application refers to a previous name.

Note: for registration purposes and as stated on the Registration application form, these must be certified or notarised 'as a true copy of the original' by a **Solicitor, Notary Public or Justice of the Peace** (not by the Police, Post Office or other person). It must be obvious who the certifying person is and include a stamp or seal.

NOTE: Notification from the Head of Dietetic Training that you have completed all the course requirements of the Masters degree will be sent to the Board **directly** by your University. The Board cannot complete the Registration until it has received this notification. Sometimes this notification is not received until March/April (or later in some cases).

The Board will notify you of the next stages in the process once all registration application documentation is received. Once you are registered, you will be invited to apply for an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) or make a non-practising declaration – see below. Please do not send forms / payment for an APC with your registration – they are separate processes.

Timelines for registration application

The Board recognises that there is a delay between students finishing their degree studies and formal confirmation of successful completion. Applications for registration can be submitted as soon as you have submitted your thesis to ensure that references and criminal record checks can be obtained (third party criminal record checks for New Zealand take around a month to be processed). The Board cannot complete your application for registration until we have confirmation that you have successfully completed your course but by applying early we will have been able to process preliminary information. You will also receive Board Newsletters and other important notices once you have made an application for registration. Please keep in mind that during March all current practitioners must renew their Annual Practising Certificates; the Board is extremely busy at this time and application processing times may be longer.

Working after course completion but before registration

Please note the correct use of dietetic titles by those who work in a dietetic related role before they are registered/hold an Annual Practising Certificate (APC). 'Dietitian' is a protected term under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 and cannot be used in any title until an individual is both registered and holding a current APC. The term 'dietetic **assistant**' can be used.

Until you are registered with the Board you are not under its jurisdiction and so should discuss with your employer the mechanisms and checks needed to keep patients / clients, and you, safe during this interim period and be **very careful** not to infer you are a dietitian.

Once registered, the HPCA Act applies to you in full and you must hold an APC if you are working within the **Scope of Practice: Dietitian**. Therefore, if you have been working as above you must **WITHOUT ANY DELAY** apply and pay for an APC on receipt of your registration documents to ensure you do not work in breach of the HPCA Act – see below for further information about APCs. It is an individual's responsibility to pay for and obtain an APC, not an employers.

Annual Practising Certificate

Upon registration you will receive a package from the Board, which includes an application form for an APC. This must be sent to the Board and payment made either by quoting a Visa/MasterCard number or by on-line banking. Your first APC will run until 31 March following your application.

There is provision for part payment of APC fees for the period 1 December to 31 March, when the cost of an APC is reduced. No other part payments at any other time are applicable. Please, do not pay your APC fee at the same time as you pay for registration – the two processes are separate and the APC fee should be paid at the relevant stage, not in advance.

Even if your employer will be paying for your APC, it is **your** responsibility, not theirs, to ensure that a payment is made correctly and on time. Please remember this, especially at the time of annual APC renewals when the Board does not have the time to chase individuals for any late or missing payments. Failure to pay on time could delay your APC or even mean that you could be practising illegally.

Annual Practising Certificates are renewed every year in March, late applicants who practise on or after 1 April before the approval of a new APC, do so unlawfully. Please refer to the late renewal of Annual Practising Certificates policy on the Board's website for further information regarding this.

If you are not intending to practice immediately, following registration, then you must make a **non-Practising Declaration**. If you are in any doubt about whether to apply for an APC or make a non-practising declaration, please contact the Board's office for advice before you return any of the forms.

Once you are registered you must either hold an APC or make a non-practising declaration every year.

Continuing Competence

Continuing Competence must be undertaken by all practitioners during the year they hold an APC. Details of 'My CCP', including your login details, will be sent after your registration. The MyCCP platform is accessed through the Board's website – you are able to log all your learning goals and activities and upload evidence.

As a practitioner with a Prescribing Endorsement you must also be sure to complete the Board's annual prescribing update on MOODLE each year in order to be able to meet recertification requirements and renew your APC.

Practice supervision

It is the Board's policy that entry-level dietitians receive practice supervision for the first year of working in NZ. This requirement is recorded as a Board condition under the HPCA Act and applicants for registration will be given an opportunity to comment on this during the registration process if they so wish. Supervision is a formal relationship between the supervisory partners, which **begins when the supervisee starts work**.

You will be directed to the [Board's Supervision Policy](#), prior to registration. It is also available on the Board's website under Policy & Guidelines.

You are required to:

- Notify the Board of your Practice Supervisor's name **before** starting work (if possible send this with the APC application); and
- Ensure your supervisor completes the '**sign on**' supervision agreement (available through MyCCP) shortly after starting dietetic practice. You will need to select them from the drop down list. Your 12 months of supervision commences at that sign on. The Board's recommendation is that formal supervision is undertaken - at least initially, for an hour weekly; and

- At the end of 12 months practising dietetics have your supervisor complete the **'sign off'** (available through MyCCP) for this condition to be removed. This sign off is also required if you change supervisors during the year; a new supervisor will also need to sign on.
- At APC renewal time, your practice supervisor must confirm that he/she has reviewed your learning goals, make comment about your progress and if applicable, that your credits have been reviewed and appear to accurately reflect the value of learning activities. This is completed through the Supervision tab on the MyCCP platform – **Approve APC**.

You must also have a prescribing supervisor if you have a Prescribing Endorsement and the Board must be notified of their name. You can select them from a drop down on the Dietitians login portal.

If you will be working in a situation where there is no readily available practice supervisor it remains your responsibility to find a practice supervisor.

Addresses - Name changes - Other Information

The **Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act)** requires practitioners to provide the Board with the following contact details: your current postal address, your current residential address and, your current work address. It also requires that you must notify the Registrar of the Board promptly of any changes in addresses. You can make the changes on the Dietitians login portal.

Your e-mail addresses are also required by the Board, because the Board uses email for newsletters and notices of importance.

It is your responsibility to keep the Board informed of any changes to your contact details and to update your details through the **Dietitians Log in** on the Boards website.

You are also obliged by law to notify the Board's Registrar of any change of your name within one month of the change being officially confirmed. You must send in a copy of the document changing your name (e.g. marriage certificate) as evidence of your name change – scan & email is acceptable.

If you have any questions or require any assistance please email the Board at:

administration@dietitiansboard.org.nz or telephone (04) 474 0746.

Please keep up to date with relevant issues by checking the Dietitians Board website from time to time:

www.dietitiansboard.org.nz

Understanding the Dietitians Board and Dietitians NZ

Even the most senior practitioners sometimes confuse the two organisations. The **Dietitians Board** is the Regulatory Authority and is charged with the duty to ensure that dietitians are qualified, competent and fit to practise dietetics, in order ensure public safety. Board members are appointed by the Minister of Health.

Dietitians NZ is a professional membership association for Dietitians in New Zealand that supports and promotes the profession of dietetics.

Check out the Board's website under Publications and review the 'Know the Difference' publication to find out more.