



# Dietitians Board Examination

## WRITTEN EXAMINATION

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Once you are assessed as eligible to sit the Dietitians Board examination you will be able to apply online to sit the written Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) examination – more information, resources and the application link will be available at the time you are advised of your equivalency assessment outcome.

### Written examination

- This is a 150 minute written Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) examination.
- Please check the Boards website for the next available exam and the closing dates for applications
- Written MCQ examination sittings are organised by an Exam Clearing House. Therefore late applications cannot be accepted.
- A cancellation fee will be applied if candidates withdraw from an exam.
- This examination can be sat outside New Zealand. If you sit it in New Zealand the examination centres are in Christchurch and Auckland
- You must pass the written examination to be eligible to sit the oral examination at a later date. Both the written and oral examinations must be passed within a three year period.

### Written MCQ Examination Information

The written examination has been developed by the Dietitians Association Australia and the Dietitians Board of New Zealand and is administered by the Dietitians Association Australia.

The examination questions are based on the Registration Competency Requirements for Entry Level Dietitians in New Zealand and the National Competency Standards for Entry Level Dietitians in Australia. These requirements/standards are benchmarked to that of entry level (new graduate) dietitians practising in New Zealand & Australia.

The examinations assess a candidate's competence to practise in the New Zealand setting and this is an important consideration in preparation for sitting the examinations.

Access to a range of Exam Preparation Resources is provided to support overseas educated dietitians who have applied for recognition of their dietetic qualifications by the New Zealand Dietitians Board. These resources may be useful in preparation for sitting the professional examinations in dietetics.

All candidates are strongly recommended to undertake some self-guided study to refresh their knowledge in the core dietetic areas, especially focusing on areas they have not recently practised in.

Copies of examination papers are NOT available for study. However, sample questions and answers are available. Sample multiple-choice questions provide an example of the examination style and format and indicate the depth of knowledge required. They do not necessarily represent the degree of difficulty of the examination or the issues to be covered.

### Format of exam

The Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) Examination in Dietetics is a 150 minute written examination consisting of 120 questions.

- The examination question paper is printed on both sides.
- The computer answer sheet is printed on both sides.
- All 120 questions are to be answered.

- All questions are of equal value.
- All answers must be on the **computer answer sheet** provided.

The examination is a closed book examination and candidates are not permitted to take reading or reference materials in the examination room. A standardised resource kit will be provided with the written examination if required.

### **Scope of exam**

The multiple choice questions within the exam may be drawn from all areas of dietetic practice. The examination is designed to assess the minimum level of competency required to practise dietetics. The questions have been validated against entry-level practitioner standards and requirements. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate competency across a range of practice settings.

### **Assessment of exam**

The questions are validated against the performance of entry-level practitioners. Candidates must demonstrate sufficient competency in all areas of practice and in all aspects of the dietetic process to pass the examination. The pass mark is based on the difficulty of the questions on a particular examination, and therefore can vary between exams, in order to represent the same standard of competency.

### **Multiple choice questions (MCQ)**

MCQ's ask a single question (the stem) and provides multiple options for an answer. Candidates must choose the correct answer. There is only one correct answer in the options provided.

There are different types of multiple choice questions used in the exam.

- Stand-alone MCQs – each question covers a specific topic
- Case-based MCQs – case-based questions provide a more detailed scenario and require the candidate to consider all aspects of the case to make a judgement based on the information which is provided.
- Extended matching questions – involving several questions based on a common list of options.

Questions are designed to test competency across a range of settings including individual case management, community and public health nutrition and food service management. Questions will cover all aspects of the dietetic process from assessment and planning through to implementation and evaluation. Some questions test a single concept or item of knowledge while others will test the application of this knowledge.

Candidates should read all questions carefully. There are no trick questions. Incorrect answers (known as distracters) are designed to reveal lack of knowledge, incorrect knowledge or incorrect application and a lack of critical thinking. There is only one correct answer for each question based on the information provided.

# Frequently asked questions about the MCQ

## **Why is the examination in an MCQ based format?**

Properly constructed and carefully validated MCQs are better able to cover a wide range of competency areas and practice settings. Validated MCQ questions also ensure that there is no subjectivity in the marking of correct answers. The questions have been developed and reviewed by a team of experts, and extensive marking is subsequently not required. Results are therefore available quickly to candidates.

## **Will I need to know reference ranges for laboratory tests?**

You will only need to be familiar with and interpret those ranges which an entry-level dietitian would be expected to understand (e.g. blood glucose levels, lipids etc). You will be provided with specific reference ranges for less common tests.

## **Can I take a calculator into the exam?**

Candidates are requested to bring a silent, battery operated non-programmable calculator without an alphabet keyboard.

## **Why are there so many questions on a particular practice area?**

Questions are designed to determine competence across practice domains and across Competency Standards and Requirements for Entry Level Dietitians. There may be fewer areas of practice for an entry-level practitioner and this limits the complexity of practice areas which can be assessed.

## **Will I have enough time to complete the examination?**

The timing for the exam is determined on the performance of entry-level practitioners with similar question types and numbers. Allowance has also been made for adaptation to a New Zealand and/or Australian language system used in the exam which may contain minor references requiring more careful reading by candidates not familiar with the New Zealand/Australian food supply or the New Zealand/Australian health care system.

## **Is there more than one correct answer for each question?**

No, each question has only one correct answer. The exam questions are based on the 'single best answer' format widely used in health professional education. This means that an expert panel has determined that each question has a single correct answer, or in some cases, an answer which is clearly 'most correct'. Of course, the remaining options are designed to sound 'plausible' if the incorrect interpretation of the facts presented is made. If you are worried that a question has more than one correct answer, carefully re-read the question and select what you consider to be the best answer.

## **What kind of feedback will I receive on my exam performance?**

Candidates will only receive notification of a pass or fail for the written examination. If a candidate fails based on substandard performance in a particular practice area, they will be alerted to the poor performance in that practice domain.

## **How is the integrity of the exam maintained?**

- Questions developed for the examination are owned by the Dietitians Association of Australia.
- A candidate who passes the written exam is eligible to sit the oral examination in dietetics and if subsequently successful will progress to becoming a New Zealand Registered Dietitian or a DAA Member.
- Sharing of questions based on recall of the examination is considered a breach of confidentiality and candidates are required to make declaration prior to sitting the exam that they will not do this in order to maintain confidentiality.
- Furthermore, there is a large bank of questions available to be used to develop multiple unique exams and exam questions are continually developed and refined.

## **Can I query my result?**

Examinations are not available for review. Candidates can appeal the examination outcome at two levels. All appeal applications must be in writing.