



DIETITIANS BOARD

Te Mana Mātanga Mātai Kai

Return to Practice

Policy Statement

This document sets out Board policy concerning return to practice after a period of time out of the dietetic workforce.

Purpose

The Board's Return to Practice policy aims to protect the health and safety of members of the public. It seeks to ensure that dietitians possess the current knowledge and skills required to practise competently and safely.

Return to practice requirements will vary according to the time out of the dietetic workforce and the Board's assessment of the individual needs of the Dietitian. In particular, the Board has regard to section 27 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act) in which the Registrar and Board must pay particular regard to cases of applications for an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) where an applicant has not held an APC, or has not lawfully practised dietetics, in the three years preceding an application.

Board requirements

(A) Returning to practice within 2 years of last APC

In such cases, Registered Dietitians will be required to fill in an Application for an APC on the current form for these purposes. At the time of applying the applicant must have met any continuing competence requirements including successful completion of the annual prescriber update, if applicable¹. Failure to complete the current prescriber update will mean that the prescribing endorsement will be removed until such time as the requirement has been successfully fulfilled.

(B) Returning to practice after more than 2 years but less than 5 years of last APC

Registered Dietitians who have not worked as a dietitian for more than 2 years, but less than 5 years and who wish to return to dietetic work, must contact the Registrar to register their intent and submit:

- a Return to Practice Application form and payment
- a Cover letter
- a CV
- names and contact details of two referees

They must also:

- Identify a mentor
- Develop and submit a professional development learning plan focused on transitioning back to practice which must be signed by the mentor.
- Supply criminal record/police checks for any periods of time spent overseas which were not covered by professional registration in those countries (in accordance with the Board's policy on criminal record checks)

¹ See Prescribing Policy – any dietitian whose APC is endorsed for prescribing must complete and pass the annual prescriber update in order to maintain the endorsement.

Any Dietitian who wishes to prescribe must sit and pass the **Prescriber Training Course** which is offered annually by the Board before their APC can be endorsed.

All assessments will be made on a case-by-case basis but Registered Dietitians who have not worked as a dietitian for more than 2 years, but less than 5 years should expect to undertake **15 months supervision**, fortnightly for the first three months and then on a monthly basis, and can expect to be called for **audit after one year**. They may also, depending on the particular circumstances of their case, be required to sit and pass the **oral element of the Board Examination**.

(C) Returning to practice after 5 years or more of last APC

Registered Dietitians who have not worked as a dietitian for 5 years or more, and who wish to return to dietetic work must contact the Registrar to register their intent and submit::

- a Return to Practice Application form and payment
- a Cover letter
- a CV
- names and contact details of two referees

They must also:

- Identify a mentor
- Develop and submit a professional development learning plan focused on transition back to practice which must be signed by the mentor.
- Supply criminal record/police checks for any periods of time spent overseas which were not covered by professional registration in those countries (in accordance with the Board's policy on criminal record checks)

All assessments will be made on a case-by-case basis but Registered Dietitians who have not worked as a dietitian for 5 years or more should expect to be required to sit and pass **both elements (written (MCQ) and oral) of the Board Examination** before being permitted to practise dietetics. Following this, they should also expect to be required to undertake **15 months supervision** fortnightly for the first three months and then on a monthly basis and will be called for **audit after one year**.

Any dietitian who wishes to prescribe must successfully complete the **Prescriber Training Course**, which is offered annually by the Board, before their APC can be endorsed.

(D) Returning from practising dietetics overseas

Registered Dietitians who have practised dietetics overseas and who wish to return to work in New Zealand within 2 years of last APC (NZ) should follow the steps outlined in **(A)**, above.

If it has been more than 2 years since last APC (NZ), then applicants will need to provide:

- a summary of work experience (CV).
- proof of dietetic competency and practice, e.g. two recent Performance Appraisals,
- reference, and/or any information about continuing competence programmes in which they have participated, and
- a Certificate of Good Standing and/or proof of Registration with Health Professions Council/credentialing agency/regulatory authority.

They will also be expected to supply criminal record/police checks for any periods of time spent overseas which were not covered by professional registration in those countries (in accordance with the Board's policy on criminal record checks)

All assessments will be made on a case by case basis, taking into account time spent overseas and career pathway followed overseas. In some cases the Board may apply a period of supervision or require a candidate to pass the **Board examination** in full or in part before an APC is issued.

Any Dietitian who wishes to prescribe in New Zealand must successfully complete the **Prescriber Training Course** which is offered annually by the Board before their APC can be endorsed.

Criminal convictions

All Practitioners returning to practice in New Zealand after an absence overseas are required to provide an original or certified copy of a criminal convictions report/police report from every country in which they have lived since they **last practised**² in New Zealand.

Practitioners who hold a current registration with dietetic regulatory body/bodies overseas are not required to provide such reports for the period for which they can demonstrate that registration.

Further information

All registered practitioners should be familiar with the provisions of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

The Board's guidance note *Understanding Registration and Annual Practising Certificates* and its policies *Registered Practitioners: Requirement to hold Annual Practising Certificate* and *Criminal convictions/Police Reports* should be read in conjunction with this policy.

The Board's Practice Supervision Policy (and agreement form) and Dietitian Prescriber policy should also be consulted.

² *'Last Practised'* means the last day practitioner practised dietetics in NZ – it may not necessarily be the day a practitioner last held a practising certificate in NZ.