

Professional Learning Needs Assessment

Dietitian's Educational Planning Tool



PO Box 510 Talent OR, 97540
www.NutritionDimension.com



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Dear Dietitian:

How do you know what you need to know? How can you assess your professional competence? How do you enhance it?

These questions will have priority status for the rest of your career, and we've created this Professional Learning Needs Assessment to help you answer them.

The concept is simple: Using a simple 1-to-10 scale — 1 being “NOVICE,” the least skilled; 10 being “MASTER,” a world-class expert — categorize your *current* skill level and your *goal* skill level in various areas of practice. Some areas of practice are further subdivided into practice components. A list of the areas of practice and definitions, with additional instructions, are on the next page.

An honest self-assessment helps you plan your professional development goals. Use these guidelines:

- **NOVICE:** I've completed college coursework and some hands-on internship experience in this area. I feel confident working in this area as an RD, but I would prefer to seek supervision and guidance from a more experienced dietitian.
- **PROFICIENT:** I've accentuated this area in my daily practice and continuing education study, but need occasional consultations with more experienced dietitians. I have held positions which required me to practice in this area. I monitor pertinent professional journals and update my skills as new products, standards of practice and regulations emerge.
- **MASTER:** My formal training included considerable work in this area, and I have advanced degrees or credentials (CNSD, CDE, FADA, etc.). I've served under a senior dietitian who mentored me, and I've mentored / taught others. I lead workshops, write articles for refereed journals, lecture to other professionals or teach continuing education courses. I supervise less experienced dietitians, and have led a department through a JCAHO or similar accreditation review.

Naturally, there will be some “gray areas” — remember, this is not a test, but a tool for growth. We hope you'll find it useful. Let me know how we can improve it.

Sincerely,

Dale Ames Kline

Dale Ames Kline, MS, RD, CNSD
President, Nutrition Dimension Inc.

Areas of Practice

- A. Age Specific Wellness/Prevention
- B. Medical Nutrition Therapy
- C. Patient Education
- D. Exercise and Fitness
- E. Food Science
- F. Computer Skills
- G. Communication Skills
- H. Food Preparation/Food Services
- I. Research Evaluation
- J. Human Resources/Management
- K. Financial Management
- L. Nontraditional Clinical/Case Management Functions
- M. Performance Improvement/Continuous Quality Improvement
- N. Ethics
- O. Additional Learning Needs
(Use this section for areas of practice not already covered)

Additional Information/Instructions

- If an area of practice does not apply to you, either skip it or write N/A.
- Within an area of practice, you may find that some of the items are not relevant. For instance, if, in the “Age Specific Wellness/Prevention” section, pregnancy, lactation, infant and pediatric nutrition are the only population groups you work with on a daily basis, score yourself on those areas and write N/A for the others. However, if you feel that you do need to know about the other population groups, score yourself anyway.
- The first three areas of practice, “Age Specific Wellness/Prevention,” “Medical Nutrition Therapy” and “Patient Education,” are subdivided into four or five practice components. Score yourself for each population group in each practice component.

Determining Your Learning Needs

- Use the last page of the self-assessment to summarize your learning needs. In the space provided, write down the specific areas of practice you would like to learn more about, your current level of expertise and your goal for the future. A comment section is provided to use as you feel appropriate — *i.e.* how you can reach your goal, a more in-depth assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, specific knowledge areas you would like to pursue or any other appropriate information.

Learning Needs Self-Assessment

This Learning Needs Self-Assessment will help you identify your learning needs, determine your current skill level, and establish the level you wish to attain. To do that, the form is divided into specific practice areas.

A. AGE SPECIFIC WELLNESS/PREVENTION

1. Each practice area is divided into five practice components.
2. Using a scale of 1 to 10 (1 lowest level, 10 highest), indicate **CURRENT proficiency level in the “Now” column under each of the five components.**
3. Using the same scale of 1 to 10, indicate your **GOAL proficiency level in the “Goal” column.**
4. Write “N/A” if the area of practice does not apply to you.
5. If you have trouble reducing everything to a number, write comments on the “Notes” page following page 12.

	Screening		Assessment		Intervention		Counseling		Care Plan	
	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal
Pregnancy										
Lactation										
Infant										
Pediatric										
School age Children										
Teenage Nutrition										
Young Adults										
Middle Aged										
Older Persons										
Other (specify)										

B. MEDICAL NUTRITION THERAPY

- Use 1 for lowest proficiency, 10 for highest.

	Screening		Assessment		Intervention		Counseling		Care Plan	
	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal
Renal										
Diabetes										
Oncology										
Liver										
GI Disorders										
AIDS										
Cardiovascular										
Pulmonary										
Transplant										
Burns										
Wound healing										
Immune disorders										
Weight management										
Enteral nutrition										
Parenteral nutrition										
General nutrition										
Dysphagia										
Nutrient drug Interactions										
Documentation in medical record										
Other (specify)										

C. PATIENT EDUCATION

- Use 1 for lowest proficiency, 10 for highest.

	Learner Assessment		Learning Objectives		Education Materials Develop/Select		Evaluation	
	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal	Now	Goal
Individual counseling								
Class preparation								
Written materials								
Selecting teaching materials								
Designing multi-media programs								
Establishing rapport with clients								
Age-specific								
Teaching children								
Teaching teens								
Teaching young adults								
Teaching older adults								
Oral presentations								
Group teaching								
Documentation								
Other (specify)								

Use the following directions for sections D through N of the Learning Needs Self-Assessment.

1. On this scale of 1 to 10, one is Novice, 10 is Master.
2. Mark your **CURRENT level of proficiency** with an "X" in the appropriate place.
3. Mark your **DESIRED level of proficiency** with a "Y" in the appropriate place.
4. Write "N/A" if the area of practice does not apply to you.
5. If you have trouble reducing everything to a number, write comments on the "Notes" page following page 12.

D. EXERCISE AND FITNESS

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Exercise physiology	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Exercise regimens	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Exercise and diabetes	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Exercise and cardiovascular	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Exercise and weight management	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Other (specify)	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10

E. FOOD SCIENCE

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Food Science Basics	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Biotechnology	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Engineered foods	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Food composition	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10
Other (specify)	1 —●—●—●—	5 —●—●—●—●—	10

F. COMPUTER SKILLS

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Basic computer skills	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Evaluating dietary software	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Internet access, e-mail	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Web site construction	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Information management	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Database construction	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
On-line literature search	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Other (specify)	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	

G. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Writing consumer materials	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Writing business communications	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Writing grant proposals	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Negotiation techniques	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Communicating with coworkers	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Oral presentations	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Writing journal articles	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Writing policies & procedures	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	
Other (specify)	1 —•—•—•— 5	—•—•—•— 10	

H. FOOD PREPARATION/FOOD SERVICES

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Recipe analysis	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Menu development	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Food service productivity	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Food storage	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Food safety, HAACP	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Food preferences	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Purchasing (food/equipment)	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Ethnic food patterns	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Culinary demonstrations	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Other (specify)	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10

I. RESEARCH EVALUATION

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Study design evaluation	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Statistics	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Outcomes research	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Outcome interpretations	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Outcome limitations	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Applying research to practice	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Developing abstracts	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10
Other (specify)	1 —●—●—●— 5	—●—●—●—●— 10	10

J. HUMAN RESOURCES/MANAGEMENT

	Novice			Proficient				Master		
Setting standards of practice	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Staffing needs	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Staff productivity	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Recruitment	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Employee selection methods	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Training	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Multi-skilling	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Supervision	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Employee evaluations	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Competency assessment	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
On-going education	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Managing change	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Record keeping	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Trends analysis	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Other (specify)	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10

K. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

	Novice			Proficient				Master		
Cost analysis/budgeting	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Business plan	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Marketing	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Entrepreneur planning	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Revenue generation	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10
Other (specify)	1	•	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	10

L. NONTRADITIONAL CLINICAL/CASE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

	Novice	Proficient	Master
"Hands-on" physical examination	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Vital signs, bowel sounds	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
CPR	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Phlebotomy	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Feeding tube placement	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Reading EKG	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Lab test results	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Glucose monitoring	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Insulin administration	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Case management	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Complementary medicine	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Other (specify)	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	

M. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT/CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Developing a plan	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Designing outcome studies	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Collecting data	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Evaluation of data/problems	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Implementation of change in process/system	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Evaluating Outcomes	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	
Other (specify)	1 —●—●—●— 5	5 —●—●—●—●— 10	

N. ETHICS

	Novice	Proficient	Master
Terminology	1 —•—•—•— 5	5 —•—•—•— 10	10
Feeding issues/ Nutrition care dilemmas	1 —•—•—•— 5	5 —•—•—•— 10	10
Ethical decision making	1 —•—•—•— 5	5 —•—•—•— 10	10
Advanced directives	1 —•—•—•— 5	5 —•—•—•— 10	10
End of life decision-making	1 —•—•—•— 5	5 —•—•—•— 10	10
Other (specify)	1 —•—•—•— 5	5 —•—•—•— 10	10

O. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

- Please use the space below for any learning needs not previously addressed.
- Attach additional pages if necessary.

