

## **Active Practice Policy**

2022 (Updated: November 2023)

*The Nova Scotia College of Dietitians and Nutritionists (NSCDN) is the regulatory body for the profession of dietetics in Nova Scotia. In the public interest, the NSCDN regulates dietitians and nutritionists to practice in a safe, ethical and competent manner.*

Applicable Legislation: [Dietitians Act](#) (2009): section 2(a), 2(x), 14

**Policy Statement:**

1. In order to meet the hourly requirement for entry to the active-practicing roster, a registrant must have practiced 500 hours (paid or unpaid) in the past three years. Active practice hours relate to engagement in the practice of dietetics<sup>1</sup> (as defined in the [Act](#) (section 2(x)), and includes research, education, consultation, management, administration, regulation, policy or system development relevant to the defined scope).
2. The registrar will review all positions where questions arise to determine whether the position falls within the legislated definition of the ‘practice of dietetics.’ Factors to consider include one or more of the following:
  - a. required to be a dietitian or a regulated health professional for their role;
  - b. role impacts the nutritional health of the public;
  - c. role impacts the practice of dietetics;
  - d. role requires the knowledge of the health care system or influences the health care system;
  - e. role requires the education, competencies, and similar experience to that acquired through dietetics education and practice.
3. To qualify for an active practice license, it is not necessary to have the job title of *dietitian* or *nutritionist*.
4. If the dietitian is also practicing and using the title of another regulated health profession (e.g. nurse, naturopath), their role must impact the nutritional health of the public or impact dietetic practice. The number of hours of *dietetics-related practice* qualifies as active practice hours and must either be validated by a regulated health professional or the dietitian is able to submit evidence of their dietetics-related practice.
5. The registrant who has successfully completed the Canadian Dietetic Registration Examination (CDRE) or those who have completed a re-entry program in the three years immediately before submitting an application are exempt from the active practice requirement.
6. If the registrant is enrolled in a dietetics-related course or program, a half-credit will qualify as 45 practice hours. The Registration Committee will deem which university course(s) or program(s) eligible for active practice hours.
7. An individual may move from the non-active roster to an active practice license if they meet the criteria for the active practice license. If the criteria have not been met, the individual may remain on the non-active roster and be referred to the Registration Committee. The Registration Committee may require the completion of a re-entry program or may issue an active practice license with conditions or restrictions.

## **Procedure:**

1. In the calculation of active practice hours, time away from work for parental leave, sick leave, leave of absence, long term disability, vacation, statutory holidays, travel to and from work, days off or on-call hours spent waiting for work are not considered active practice hours.
2. Registrants are expected to obtain and maintain documents that substantiate paid and unpaid reported practice hours. Documentation may consist of pay statements, invoices, or verification in writing from employer, organization or another regulated health professional. This documentation may be requested to validate reported hours.
3. Registrants are required to declare the number of paid and/or unpaid practice hours each year.
4. Registrants who declare unpaid practice hours toward their active practice hourly requirement must maintain detailed documentation of the nature of the work.
5. If the registrar questions whether a registrant has practiced dietetics based on the definition of active practice and criteria listed above (2a-e), the registrant will submit, in writing, how their role meets the criteria listed about in 2 (a-e). If the registrar is unsatisfied that the registrant qualifies for active practice, the registrar shall refer the decision to the Registration Committee.
6. The Registration Committee's decision can be appealed to the Registration Appeal Committee within 30 days of written notice.

## **Q&A**

### **How do I calculate the number of hours that qualify as active practice hours?**

The following are two examples to show how to calculate active practice hours.

#### Example #1: full-time employee

A full-time employee worked 37.5 hours/week for 52 weeks (1950 hrs), and took 10 stat holidays (75 hrs), 20 vacation days (150 hrs), and 5 sick days (37.5 hrs). This full-time employee accumulated 1690 paid active practice hours for the year.

Full-time employees easily meet the active practice hour requirement over the three-year period. On the renewal form, simply declare that you have been employed as a full-time employee within the past three years. There is no need to state the number of weeks worked per year.

#### Example #2: parental leave for two years and worked part-time for one year.

A dietitian was on parental leave between April 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. They then worked part time (4 hours/day x 4 days/week for 40 weeks (= 640 hours). During this time, they took 5 sick days (20 hrs), 5 stat holidays (20 hrs), and 10 vacation days (40 hours). They then went on parental leave again in October 2021. Between October 2022 and March 31, 2023, they returned to work part time (4 hours/day x 4 days/week) for 20 weeks (=320 hours). During this

time, they took 3 sick days (12 hrs), 5 stat holidays (20 hrs), and 10 vacation days (40 hours). In March 2023, they would declare 808 paid practice hours.

Unpaid practice hours included 16 hours every March leading a local Nutrition Month Campaign (= 48 hours). They also documented their volunteer work as a board member of the Nutrition Council (75 hrs in 3 yrs). Their total unpaid practice hours equaled 123 hours.

Their total active practice hours over the past three years are 931 hours.

**CALCULATIONS**

January 2021 to October 2021  
 $4 \times 4 = 16$  hrs/ week  
 $16 \times 40 = 640$  hrs in 40 weeks  
 $640 - 20 - 20 - 40 = 560$  hours

October 2022 to March 31, 2023  
 $4 \times 4 = 16$  hrs /week  
 $16 \times 20 = 320$  hrs in 20 weeks  
 $320 - 12 - 20 - 40 = 248$  hours

Total paid hours: 808 hrs

Volunteer hours:  
 $48 + 75 = 123$

Total hours:  $808 + 123 = 931$

### **Do I submit evidence of my practice hours to the College?**

The renewal form will ask you to declare the number of paid and unpaid practice hours you work each year. The college will randomly audit documentation and may request that you submit your documentation if there is any question of your practice status. A declaration is as valid as a submission. It is professional misconduct (defined in the Act (section 1(ad)(xii)) to make a false declaration.

### **I am not employed as a dietitian, but my role involves providing nutrition education to employees within the organization. How would I calculate my active practice hours?**

In this situation, you would submit detailed documentation of your role and how it compares to the scope of practice that is defined in the Dietitians Act. Also document how your role addresses the factors listed in the above policy statement (2a-e). You would also maintain a detailed log of the hours that you are actively practicing dietetics and have your employer or another regulated health professional verify the hours and role description.

### **What level of detail is required?**

In the above example, the person provides nutrition education to employees within the organization but is not employed as a dietitian. The other part of their role is not related to dietetics (e.g. librarian, nurse). They would document the date, description of activity, and time (in hours) spent researching, planning, and implementing the nutrition education sessions.

### **I graduated within three years. When do I need to meet the active practice requirement?**

Those who passed the national exam or who have completed a re-entry program in the three years immediately before submitting an application are exempt from the active practice requirement. New graduates have three years to accumulate 500 hours.

You will need to meet the active practice hour requirement at the annual renewal three years after passing the exam. For example, if you passed the May 2022 exam, you will need to have worked at least 500 hours when you renew your license in March 2026.

### **I passed the national exam within three years, but only started working full time two months before renewal. Will I be able to renew my license?**

In this circumstance, the Registration Committee would assess your application for active practice and potentially renew your license with a condition or limitation. This would enable you to continue working (for example, under supervision) until you meet the 500 hour requirement.

### **What can I refer to myself as while on the non-practice roster?**

If you are on the non-practicing roster, you are not licensed to practice or use a protected title. Therefore, you may not refer to yourself as a dietitian, RD or nutritionist. You may refer to yourself in social situations as a non-practicing dietitian.

### **I plan to take time off work and enroll full-time in a master's program. Am I required to maintain an active practice license?**

If you are enrolled in a master's program or other educational pursuits, you do not have to maintain an active practice license with the College if you do not intend to practice dietetics or use the title dietitian, RD or nutritionist. You may choose to maintain your College registration on the non-practicing roster. NOTE: Post-graduate degrees must be reviewed and approved by the Registration Committee if you wish for the degree to qualify as active practice or to impact your active practice hour requirements.

### **Am I able to count non-paid hours that I spend on professional development toward the active practice hour requirement?**

Time spent engaged in continuing education activities (e.g. workshops, literature review) to meet the requirements of the Continuing Competency Program does not qualify as active practice hours.

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<sup>i</sup> Practice of Dietetics: “...the translation and application of scientific knowledge of food and nutrition to human health through

- comprehensive nutritional assessment to determine nutritional status, nutrition-related diagnosis and nutritional requirements of individuals or populations related to health status and disease;
- the planning, implementation and evaluation of nutrition interventions aimed at promoting health and preventing disease;
- nutrition prescription, including enteral and parenteral nutrition and the prescription or ordering of drugs or other agents to optimize nutrition status;
- ordering parameters required to monitor nutrition interventions and evaluate nutrition outcomes;
- the provision of nutrition education and counselling to clients, families, colleagues and health-care professionals;
- development and evaluation of policies that affect food, food security and nutrition as it relates to health status;
- integration of food and nutrition principles in the development and management of food service systems;
- such delegated medical functions as are approved in accordance with the Medical Act, and;
- such other aspects of dietetics as may be prescribed in regulations approved by the Governor in Council, and research, education, consultation, management, administration, regulation, policy or system development relevant to subclauses (i) to (ix)” (Dietitians Act, 2009).