



UPCOMING COLLEGE PROCLAMATION

Upon the proclamation of the *Dietitians Act* (2009), NSDA will become the Nova Scotia College of Dietitians and Nutritionists (NSCDN). This communiqué answers questions you may have about proclamation. There is also a recording of a virtual orientation session that took place in December 2021. A link to the recording was sent to you by email. **If you are not receiving regular emails from NSDA, please check your promotion and spam files, and ensure that the email address on the registration portal is current.**

The mandate of a professional regulatory body (college) is to regulate the practice of a profession in the public interest. A college regulates a profession to ensure safe, ethical, and competent practice. A profession is regulated so that the public can trust that those practicing in the profession have specific credentials, are current in their practice, and practice according to established standards. Anyone can go to a college and lay a complaint if they believe that a health professional has provided poor quality care or caused harm.

NSDA was established in 1956 and functioned both as a regulatory body and association. In 1998, NSDA voluntarily discontinued its association function. NSDA's legislation defines and protects the profession's titles. As a college, titles and the scope of practice are defined and protected. In contrast to a regulatory body, an association generally supports advocacy and the development of programs and services for its members.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

The professional scope of practice is defined in the 2009 Dietitians Act (section 2x). A scope of practice will enable dietitians to practice to their full capacity. In other words, they will be authorized to do what they are trained and qualified to do. For example, the dietitian will be authorized to order nutrition support for a patient in hospital or order a blood test to help monitor whether a diet is effective for addressing a nutrition diagnosis. **A communication plan, policies and standards related to nutrition prescription will be launched after college proclamation.**

PROTECTED TITLES AND TERMS

Those not licensed with NSCDN will not be authorized to use the designations *dietitian*, *registered dietitian*, *nutritionist*, *professional nutritionist*, *professional dietitian*, *R.D.*, *R.D.N.*, *P.Dt.* or any derivation, translation or abbreviation of those designations. Under section 21(2) of the College Act, only those licensed with the college will be able to refer to their practice activities using the terms, *dietetics*, *nutrition therapy* or *diet therapy*.

COLLEGE BYLAWS

College Bylaws have been drafted and consultation on the draft has taken place with registrants. Bylaws direct the internal operations of the College. The College board and committees will include active practising dietitians and public members. Public members are appointed by the government. When the College Bylaws have been finalized, they will be posted on the College website.

LICENSE CATEGORIES UNDER THE COLLEGE

Active practicing license - maintained with a minimum of 500 hours over a three-year period. **The active practice hour requirement comes into effect one year after the date of proclamation.** According to the Dietitians Regulations (2022), dietitians maintain a record of hours worked in the practice of dietetics that covers the preceding three years. The College may audit these records at any time. Dietitians are exempt from the active practice hour requirement within the first three years of passing the Canadian Dietetic Registration Examination (CDRE). Refer to the Active Practice Policy for more information. The policy is posted on the NSDA website under DIETITIANS/PUBLICATIONS.

Temporary license – for dietitians to be licensed in Nova Scotia for a period of time while they actively practice in Nova Scotia. These dietitians are licensed in another Canadian jurisdiction. For example, a dietitian from another province will apply for a temporary license if they plan on coming to Nova Scotia to offer nutrition services to the public. Consistent with NSDA’s policy, under the College Act, dietitians physically located outside of Nova Scotia providing virtual dietetic services to Nova Scotia residents are not required to be licensed with NSCDN.

Candidate license – individuals are licensed to practice under this license category until they pass the CDRE. They are required to practice under the general supervision of a regulated health professional. This license category replaces NSDA’s “temporary membership.” The designation for this license is *registered dietitian (candidate)* or RD(c).

Conditions or restrictions may be placed on any of the license categories. An example of a condition is to practice under the direct supervision of another dietitian. An example of a restriction is to limit practice to a specific area of practice.

There will also be a **Non-active Roster**. This is not a license to practice nor a license to use a protected title. Dietitians on a leave of absence or retired can transfer to a non-active roster until they return to practice. They will not be required to participate in the Continuing Competency Program (CCP) nor pay the annual renewal fee while on the non-active roster. If they have not practiced 500 hours in the preceding three years when they apply to return to active practice, they must apply for reinstatement.

RATIONALE FOR THE ACTIVE PRACTICE HOUR REQUIREMENT

Maintaining and enhancing competency occurs in practice and through continuing education. A college's CCP promotes currency and competency by setting requirements for professional development. Being current and competent is also influenced by being active in practice. Therefore, an active practice hour requirement has become a best practice in professional regulation, in addition to a CCP.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR AN ACTIVE PRACTICE LICENSE

Upon proclamation, NSDA dietitians with a full license will be eligible for an active practising license if they have engaged in the practice of dietetics in the previous twenty-four months. There is not an hour requirement for an initial license. Dietitians are eligible for this license for a period of one year following proclamation of the College Act. Those who passed the CDRE in the three years immediately before proclamation of the College Act are eligible for the active practice license.

If you have not practiced dietetics (paid or unpaid) within the twenty-four months preceding proclamation, your name will be on the non-active roster. To return to practice, you would apply for an active-practice license by applying for reinstatement. The Registration Committee would assess your application and upgrading may be required. Alternatively, a condition (e.g. mentorship) or restriction (e.g. limit to a specific practice area) may be placed on your license. If you have not written the CDRE and you renew your NSDA license in 2022, the pass of the exam will not be required for reinstatement.

Registration policies will be posted on the website prior to proclamation under DIETITIANS/PUBLICATIONS.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Upon proclamation, every dietitian with an active practice license must have professional liability insurance coverage. The minimum requirement is \$5 million per claim. Legal expense endorsement coverage is strongly recommended. This endorsement covers your legal expenses should the College receive a complaint about your practice.

Many employers carry insurance that covers their employees while they are working for that organization. Your employer's insurance does not cover any services you provide as a volunteer or outside your employment practice setting. Professional liability insurance provided by an employer is only acceptable coverage for dietitians within that employer's workplace. Dietitians who practice in more than one workplace must carry professional liability insurance for each place of employment.

Dietitians should consider the risk in their practice and decide whether they wish to purchase legal expense reimbursement coverage and professional liability insurance in addition to the insurance provided by their employer(s). For example, dietitians who provide direct client care would be at a higher risk of a public complaint than a dietitian employed in an administrative role. Dietitians who volunteer or practice independently, must purchase professional liability insurance. Dietitians of Canada (DC) members can purchase insurance through DC. NSDA is also exploring other insurance options and will communicate these via email.

There will be further communication about when and how to provide evidence of liability insurance to the College.

How will NSCDN continue to support dietetic practice?

The College will continue to support dietetic practice by:

- Implementing a CCP that supports you to remain current and enhance your competency to practice;
- Offering education related to professional practice and professional regulation;
- Upholding policies and standards of practice;
- Publishing practice guidelines;
- Providing practice support by a practice advisor;
- Continuing to regulate in a manner to assure the public of the profession's integrity and trustworthiness; and
- Educating the public about the College's role and the benefits of seeking a regulated nutrition practitioner for nutrition services.

If you have questions, please email info@nsdassoc.ca

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