

Background Document

Topic:	Recognition of the United States Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics Accredited Programs
Purpose:	For Consultation
Audience:	System Partners – ACEND, Ontario Ministry of Health, Ontario Office of the Fairness Commissioner, the Alliance of Canadian Dietetic Regulatory Bodies
From:	College of Dietitians of Ontario

ISSUE

The College of Dietitians of Ontario (the College) is seeking feedback from system partners regarding its future recognition of United States (US) Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics Accredited Programs (ACEND) accredited programs, prior to obtaining final Board approval.

HISTORY

In March 1998, the College began recognizing applicants from the US who have been licensed with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), the dietetic licensing body in that jurisdiction. In 2013, the College began recognizing programs accredited by ACEND, as equivalent to programs accredited in Canada, where the accreditation award entitles the graduates of the ACEND programs to sit the licensure examination in the US.

This recognition is articulated in College [Policy 2-30: Competency Standards and Accrediting Bodies](#) and operationalized in [Policy 4-20 Applicants from \(ACEND\) Accredited Programs](#) to enable the Registration Program to recognize applicants from ACEND accredited programs as meeting the College’s non-exemptible academic and practical training requirements. If an applicant meets all the other non-exemptible registration requirements (e.g., good character and conduct, authorization to work in Canada), they are eligible for registration with the College.

RECENT ANALYSIS

As part of CDO's work to transition to the [Canadian 2020 Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice \(ICDEP\)](#), a comparison of both US and Canadian entry-level competencies was conducted and reviewed by the Registration Committee, using the following documentation provided by ACEND:

- [ACEND Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Didactic Programs \(DPD\)](#)
- [ACEND Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Internship Programs \(DI\)](#)
- [ACEND Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Coordinated Programs \(CP\)](#)
- [ACEND Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Foreign Dietitian Education Programs \(FDE\)](#)
- [ACEND Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Graduate Degree Programs \(GP\) \(Future Education Model\)](#)

Findings:

1. Future Education Model Program: Evidence of substantial equivalence of the Canadian and US entry-level competencies **was found** between the 2020 ICDEP and this program.
2. DPD, DI, CP and FDE Programs: Substantial equivalence between the Canadian and US entry-level competencies **was not found** for these programs.¹

¹ ACEND informed the College that all their dietetic training programs will be moving towards a *Future Education Model* designation by 2027.

PROPOSED POLICY AMENDMENTS

Given the findings of the recent analysis, the College is considering the following amendments to recognition of US-based programs:

a) *Recognition of applicants from ACEND-accredited Future Education Model programs.*

The College has reasonable evidence to support its recognition of ACEND's *Future Education Model* programs. ACEND indicated that all programs will be held to this standard by 2027, which will improve future access to registration in Ontario by US applicants.

b) *Implementing a transition period until August 31, 2025, for the College to continue its current recognition of ACEND-accredited programs.*

A transition period until August 31, 2025, provides notice to potential applicants who will complete their training after this date to plan accordingly if they will be subject to a future College equivalency assessment.

c) *Recognition of new or returning to practise applicants who graduated from ACEND-accredited programs before August 31, 2025, when the College recognized such programs in policy.*

The College's current practice is to recognize a Canadian applicant's academic and practical training if, at the time of completion, the program(s) were accredited by a Board-approved accreditation body. Given that Policy 2-30 currently articulates the recognition of ACEND-accredited programs, in the interest of fairness and transparency, a similar process could be followed for these US applicants.

d) *Requiring all ACEND-accredited applicants who complete their training after August 31, 2025, to undergo a CDO equivalency assessment like any other internationally trained applicant.*

This would provide a consistent approach for all internationally trained applicants, where there is insufficient documented evidence of equivalency of a program.²

Following the College's system partner consultation, feedback will be considered. Policies 2-30: *Competency Standards and Accrediting Bodies* and 4-20: *Applicants from ACEND Accredited Programs*, will be presented to the College's Board for approval at their December 2023 meeting. The College will communicate the Board's decision making to system partners and incorporate the approved policy changes into Registration Program processes.

² ACEND's Future Education Model programs would continue to be recognized.

EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed policy amendments balances fairness, access to registration, and the College's overarching mandate of public protection.

Given the recognition history of ACEND-accredited programs, the College must consider whether any policy changes will inadvertently impose barriers for applicants from the US to be registered in Ontario. Implementing a two-year transition period helps to mitigate this risk.

Handling all applicants educated outside of Canada, that have not been assessed as equivalent, via a similar process provides equitable access to registration and would not favour any one jurisdiction over another.

The Registration Program will monitor the impact of these policy changes to ensure there are no unintended consequences for applicants.