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Introduction

The College of Dietitians of Ontario was founded in 1991 through the [Dietetics Act, 1991](#), and became a regulatory body on December 31, 1993. Its mandate under the [Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991](#), and the [Dietetics Act, 1991](#), is to regulate the profession of dietitians in Ontario in the interest of the public and public protection. An essential part of that public protection mandate is to ensure that only those individuals who are qualified become registered with the College and use the title of dietitian in Ontario.

The registration requirements for the College include academic and practical training requirements. This document was prepared to provide guidance to applicants who intend to meet the College's practical training requirement by organizing their own alternative to an accredited internship/practical training program.

The College refers to this type of practical training as “independent” because the applicant takes full responsibility for finding their Practicum Advisor, organizing the practical training, arranging the placements with appropriate supervisors, and documenting the learning experiences and assessments for submission to the College.

The College is not an Educational Institution

It is important to remember that the College itself does not provide practical training. The College's role is to assess the practical training that an applicant has completed and to determine whether it meets the requirements set out in the [Registration Regulation](#). If an applicant chooses to meet the practical training requirement through this route, **the applicant is responsible for planning and organizing all aspects of their Independent Practicum.**

You MUST have an Advisory Dietitian

The College is unable to provide individual guidance to students who choose to attempt an Independent Practicum. For this reason, all applicants who choose this route must have an Advisory Dietitian.

You must have an Advisory Dietitian to help you plan and organize your experiences, to help you interpret feedback in each rotation, and to ensure that you develop a plan to address that feedback in future rotations. The role of the Advisory Dietitian is highly comparable to the role that an internship/practicum coordinator plays in an accredited internship/practicum, in terms of advising the student, advising supervisors, monitoring the progress of the student, and adjusting the program plan as required to address the student's identified learning needs. The advice and guidance you receive from your Advisory Dietitian will be critical to your success. For this reason, you must ensure that your Advisory Dietitian complies with the eligibility criteria as outlined in College [Policy 2-12: Criteria for Practicum Advisory Dietitians](#). You must also request your Advisory Dietitian complete the [Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form](#) and email it to the College at: registration@collegeofdietitians.org prior to the start of your Independent Practicum.

Once you send in your final Independent Practicum submission, the College will verify that your Advisory Dietitian complied with Policy 2-12 throughout the duration of your Independent Practicum.

I. Planning the Practicum

Competencies

In Canada, the standards used for the accreditation of dietetics education programs and for the development of the Canadian Dietetic Registration Examination are the [Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice](#), 2013 (ICDEP). These competencies are statements that outline the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and judgements necessary for the competent performance of entry-level dietitians. You and your Advisory Dietitian will plan and organize placements and activities that will enable you to develop and demonstrate all the performance indicators in the ICDEP.

Independent Practicum Standards Worksheet

The Independent Practicum Standards are the standards that you will use to plan your practicum and prepare your submission. They are the same standards that will be used by the Registration Committee to evaluate your practicum. The [Independent Practicum Standards Worksheet](#) outlines the standards that will be used to assess your practicum, the documents you must submit, and the criteria that will be used to evaluate those documents.

Be Careful not to Misrepresent Yourself

This route to becoming registered with the College is not well known. You will need to take care in how you introduce yourself when you approach potential supervisors. Many people misunderstand and assume that you are a student from a structured educational program that is sponsored or organized by the College. It is very important when you explain the Independent Practicum to potential supervisors and that you do not represent yourself as being a “student” from the College of Dietitians of Ontario. When explaining the purpose of the placement, you should indicate that you are “organizing practical training experiences in order to meet the registration requirements of an Independent Practicum for the College of Dietitians of Ontario”.

Supervisors

You will be arranging a series of placements/practicum experiences. These placements must be supervised by a Registered Dietitian who will give you guidance and feedback, and who will evaluate your performance.

Students must ensure that all of their Supervisors for their respective practicum placements comply with the eligibility criteria as outlined in College [Policy 2-11: Approving Supervisory Dietitians](#).

Each supervisor must also:

- sign the [Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form](#) prior to beginning the placement and send it to the College;
- receive a copy of this Independent Practicum Guide; and
- receive a copy of the College's [Guidelines for Supervising Learners](#).

Once you send in your final Independent Practicum submission, the College will verify that all of your supervisors complied with [Policy 2-11](#) throughout the duration of the supervisory period.

Note: You must have at least two supervisory dietitians evaluate you within at least two different nutrition care placements.

Evaluation

The following documents must be used to track the attainment of competencies during your practicum placements:

1. [Competency Attestation Log Book](#)

Use the log book to keep track of the activities that you complete and the competencies that you address during each placement. **Do not submit this document to the College with your application.** It is meant to help you reflect on your learning activities when you are completing the Placement Evaluation Form (see below) at the end of each placement and when you are writing your Activity Summary (see Submission Requirements on page 9).

2. [Placement Evaluation Form](#)

Using your log book to help you reflect on the activities that you have completed that support the achievement of the competencies, complete the Placement Evaluation Form at the end of each practicum placement. You will use this form to complete your self-assessment of your performance during the placement. Review your self-assessment with your Supervisor and work together to complete a final version of the evaluation. The final version is sent to your Advisory Dietitian, who will review and determine if any changes to your program plan are required. **A copy of the Placement Evaluation Form for each placement must be included with your final Independent Practicum submission.**

3. [Master List of Competencies](#)

This document must travel with you to each practicum placement. The Master List of Competencies document can be completed electronically. Use this document to track your achievement of the ICDEP. When you meet with the Supervisor to do the final evaluation for each placement, review the [Placement Evaluation Form](#) to identify all competencies for which you have achieved the required rating of "C" (Competent). The first time you achieve a "C" rating for each competency, the Supervisor should sign off on that competency in the Master List of Competencies. You must achieve a rating of "C" in all competencies by the end of your Independent Practicum.

Culminating Practical Experience (Summary Evaluation)

In addition to providing you with the opportunity to demonstrate competencies that have not yet been signed off, your last rotation in each area of practice (Nutrition Care, Population and Public Health, and Food Services Management) will also be used to evaluate your entry-level proficiency.

Much like the “staff relief” rotation in an accredited internship/practicum, the dietitian who supervises your final placement in each area of dietetic practice (Nutrition Care; Population and Public Health; and Food Services Management) will be asked to evaluate your overall competence compared to entry-level proficiency using the [Summary Evaluation Form](#). For the benefit of both the student and Supervisor, “Entry-Level” is defined on all the evaluation forms. **The Summary Evaluation Forms must be directly submitted to the College by the respective supervising dietitian.**

If your Supervisor does not feel that you have demonstrated entry-level proficiency (even though a dietitian may have signed off on all the individual performance indicators for that area of practice), you must complete additional experiences until you have addressed the issues/deficiencies identified. The additional experiences can be with the same Supervisor or with someone else.

Important Note: Although simulated activities are accepted for demonstration of individual performance indicators, they are not acceptable for demonstration of overall competence for completing the Summary Evaluation Form. The [Summary Evaluation Form](#) for each area of practice must be based on observations of your performance in real-life situations.

Practicum Length

It is not enough to simply “put in the time”. In the evidence worksheet, under Standard 3, the minimum length for the practicum is listed as 1,250 hours, which works out to roughly 34 weeks based on a 37.5 hour work week.

Although the standards identify the minimum amount of time that an applicant may need to complete the practicum, you will need to spend as much time as it takes to demonstrate all the competencies, and successfully demonstrate entry-level proficiency in all three core areas of dietetic practice.

For many applicants, this will likely mean more than 1,250 hours.

II. Overview of Steps

The following are the steps and requirements that an applicant must follow to complete an Independent Practicum.

Step 1. Review this Guide along with all the supporting documents and forms.

Step 2. Find an Advisory Dietitian. Make sure the Advisory Dietitian has a copy of this Guide as well as the supporting documents and forms. Make sure the Advisory Dietitian complies with the requirements of [Policy 2-12: Criteria for Practicum Advisory Dietitians](#).

Step 3. Evaluate the currency of your dietetic knowledge. Accredited internships/practicum programs in Ontario require all applicants who graduated from their accredited undergraduate program more than 3 years ago to complete the College's Knowledge and Competence Assessment Tool (KCAT) before they are eligible to apply. Click [here](#) for more information on the KCAT for demonstrating academic currency.

If you graduated more than 3 years prior to beginning an Independent Practicum, the next step for you is to determine the currency of your knowledge. You may consider a variety of activities to improve the currency of your knowledge, including self-study, workshops, online courses or webinars, or university-level courses in:

- Therapeutic/clinical nutrition;
- Population health/health promotion; and/or
- Food Services Management/Quantity Food Production and Management.

If eligible, you may also demonstrate your academic currency and readiness for practical training by writing the College's KCAT.

If you graduated from your academic degree more than three (3) years prior to beginning an Independent Practicum, your final Independent Practicum submission must include a detailed summary of how you and your Advisory Dietitian determined you have current dietetic knowledge to establish that you are ready to complete an Independent Practicum. This summary must be acceptable to the panel of the Registration Committee who will review your final Independent Practicum submission.

Step 4. Work with your Advisory Dietitian to plan your experiences. Your final submission to the College must include a report from your Advisory Dietitian that outlines your program plan and must include:

- The process used by the Advisory Dietitian to determine your suitability to pursue practical training through this route;
- How placements were planned to ensure a logical progression of learning activities;
- A map showing which of the performance indicators and competencies were addressed by each learning activity; and
- How evaluation was planned and monitored.

Step 5. Ensure that your program plan includes evaluation. This guide prescribes the format for documenting the following:

- achievement of the [Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice](#) (ICDEP) (see [Master List of Competencies](#));
- evaluation of performance at the end of each placement (see [Placement Evaluation Form](#)); and
- overall entry-level proficiency in each area of practice (See [Summary Evaluation Forms](#)).

In addition to these evaluation documents, your program plan must include a discussion of how you will:

- receive ongoing feedback about your strengths and areas for further development during the rotation (e.g., at the end of each day, at the end of each week);
- adjust your program plan to address any issues that may be identified during your placements; and
- ensure that each new Supervisor receives information about the feedback from your previous placements, to help set learning goals and identify activities that will address areas for improvement.

Step 6. Organize placements. This can take much more time that you think. You need to find Supervisory Dietitians who meet the qualifications described on page 3, who are willing to supervise your experiences, and who will:

1. Attest to your competence by signing off on the various entry level competencies; and
2. Review and sign descriptions of the activities that you have completed under their supervision.

Be prepared for significant challenges:

- Even if a dietitian has agreed to supervise a placement for you, their employer may refuse to allow the placement for a variety of reasons.
- You may be asked to sign an education agreement or learning contract. These contracts can take several weeks to draft and get approved.
- Many organizations require proof of professional liability insurance and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage. Some organizations will refuse to accommodate you on this basis.
 - You may be able to purchase liability insurance and accident insurance through Dietitians of Canada (www.dietitians.ca) or another independent insurance provider.
 - WSIB is not available to you as an independent learner who is not enrolled in a school or internship program.

- The *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017*, made several changes to Ontario's [Employment Standards Act, 2000](#), that may impact employers who take on dietetic learners. Students completing independent practicums should consult with their placement Supervisors and seek legal advice as necessary to ensure that they are complying with these and all other employment standards requirements.

Step 7. Prepare for placements. Prior to each placement, you should have a meeting with the Supervisor to discuss your learning goals and review the documents used for evaluation. If you have not done so already, you should ensure that the Supervisor complies with [Policy 2-11: Approving Supervisory Dietitians](#) and has received and reviewed the following:

1. This Independent Practicum Guide.
2. The College's [Guidelines for Supervising Learners](#).
3. [Placement Evaluation Form](#) from each of your previous placements.
4. The [Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form](#). This form must be completed by each supervisor prior to starting each placement and directly sent to the College at: registration@collegeofdietitians.org.
5. A list of your learning goals for the placement. This includes the performance indicators as well as areas of weakness identified in a previous evaluation.

This will help the Supervisor to plan your experiences and projects. It also provides the opportunity for the Supervisor to give you feedback about whether your learning goals are achievable in their specific work setting. There should be no surprises for the Supervisor at the end of the placement regarding what performance indicators and activities they are being asked to evaluate.

Step 8. Complete your placements. During your placement, keep records of the activities you complete in your [log book](#). The log book will help you to complete the Activity Summary (see details on page 9) and your self-assessment, which will form the basis for the discussion with your Supervisor to complete your final [Placement Evaluation Form](#).

When the placement is finished, ensure that you book time to meet with the Supervisor to review your self-assessment, draft the final Placement Evaluation, and sign the Master List of Competencies where appropriate. Ensure you also schedule time to meet with your Supervisor so that they can sign off on your Activity Summary for the placement. You should ensure that you complete the Activity Summary as soon as possible after the placement. It can be difficult for a Supervisor to provide an honest, objective evaluation of your performance if too much time has passed before they receive documents to review and sign. The Supervisor will only sign off on a summary if they agree that the description of the activity is accurate.

Step 9. Prepare your submission for the College and submit it along with your [application form](#) and [fees](#). Your complete submission must include the following documents (see details below):

1. Application Form
2. Master List of Placements
3. Placement Evaluation Form from Each Placement
4. Master List of Competencies
5. Activity Summary
6. Program Plan
7. Evaluation Plan (may be addressed as a sub-section of the program plan)
8. [Summary Evaluation Forms](#) from All Three Areas of Practice (**must be submitted directly to the College at: registration@collegeofdietitians.org from each of these three supervisors**)
9. Documentation of Currency of Dietetic Knowledge (as applicable)
10. [Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form](#) from each Supervisor. Ensure this form has been sent directly to the College at: registration@collegeofdietitians.org by each Supervisor prior to starting each placement.
11. [Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form](#) from your Advisor. Ensure this form has been sent directly to the College at: registration@collegeofdietitians.org prior to starting your Independent Practicum.
12. Resume from your Advisory Dietitian and each Supervisor.

III. Submitting the Practicum Documents for Assessment

When you have completed the Independent Practicum, submit one combined PDF of the documents listed below for review by the College's Registration Committee. Your final Independent Practicum submission should be emailed to: registration@collegeofdietitians.org

Your submission should be organized so that the pages are numbered sequentially and there should be a table of contents using the headings in Appendix I. Each page should be signed by the dietitian who supervised the activities/placement. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

Submission Requirements

1. Application Form for Registration with the College.

- Download the [application form](#) and submit this along with all required documents to complete your application.
- Where the application form asks about practical training, check "Independent Practicum".
- Fees for assessment of an Independent Practicum include an application fee of \$185.00, an Academic Assessment Fee of \$425 (only for non-accredited academic programs), and a Practical Training Assessment Fee of \$425. Once your application form has been

received, you will be emailed instructions on how to pay your fees online. Only Visa and Mastercard in CAD are accepted.

2. Master List of Placements ([Click here for sample](#))

Master List of Placements with the following information about each placement:

- Name of organization;
- Dates of the placement, and total hours completed during the placement;
- Area of dietetic practice covered in placement (e.g., population health, clinical, food services, etc.);
- Name of Supervisors (and provincial regulatory body registration number); and
- Signatures of Supervisor. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

3. Placement Evaluation Form ([Click to view](#))

Your submission must include a Placement Evaluation Form for each placement/rotation. Each page of the placement evaluation form must be initialed by the Supervisor. Electronic initials are acceptable.

4. Master List of Competencies ([Click to view](#))

Refer to page 4 of this document for details. You should submit one document with all signatures. Multiple copies will not be accepted. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

5. Activity Summary ([Click here for Sample](#))

Prepare a summary of the activities that you completed during each placement. The summary must include a description of:

- The orientation to the organization or practice;
- The types of activities completed to achieve competencies;
- Any challenges you experienced during the placement; and
- A summary of the feedback received.

Each page of the summary must be initialed and dated by the Supervisor. Electronic initials are acceptable.

6. Program Plan

You and your Advisory Dietitian must submit a joint report about your program plan (see details on pages 3 - 4 of this document). Each page of the program plan must be signed by the Advisory Dietitian. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

7. Evaluation Plan

Your program plan should include a sub-section with information about evaluation for your practicum (see details on pages 3-4 of this document). Each page of the evaluation plan must be initialed by the Advisory Dietitian. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

8. Completed Summary Evaluation Forms from all Three Areas of Practice ([Click to view](#))

Your submission is not considered complete without a [Summary Evaluation Form](#) that attests to your having demonstrated entry-level proficiency in the last placement for each of the three core areas of practice (Nutrition Care; Population and Public Health; and Food Services Management).

Your Advisory Dietitian is responsible for liaising with the dietitian who supervised your final placement in each area of the three core areas of dietetic practice. The Advisory Dietitian must ensure that you have demonstrated entry-level proficiency and/or identify any additional learning needs.

The Summary Evaluation Forms must be sent directly to the College by your Supervisors from each of the final placements in each core area of dietetic practice (a total of 3 Summary Evaluation Forms). Please request these Supervisors email the forms directly to: registration@collegeofdietitians.org

9. Documentation of the Currency of Your Dietetic Knowledge.

If you graduated from your undergraduate degree more than three (3) years prior to your first practicum placement, you must submit a detailed description of what you did to ensure that your dietetic knowledge was current. For example, did you complete upgrading courses or workshops; did you have a Registered Dietitian evaluate the currency of your knowledge? Or, you could demonstrate our currency by writing the [College's KCAT](#) and obtaining a Level I result.

10. Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form from Each Supervisor and Your Advisory Dietitian

The Advisory Dietitian and all Supervisors must complete and sign the applicable Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form. Your Advisory Dietitian must complete the form prior to you beginning your Independent Practicum. This form must also be completed by each supervisor and sent to the College on or before the start of each placement. Forms can be sent directly to: registration@collegeofdietitians.org. Your submission will not be considered complete without a signed form from your Advisory Dietitian and each Supervisor that appears on your master list of placements.

- [Advisory Dietitian Form](#)
- [Supervising RD Form](#)

11. Resume for Your Advisor and Each of Your Supervisors

You must arrange for your Advisory Dietitian and each Supervisor to provide a resume or summary of their qualifications. The Advisory Dietitian or Supervisors may choose to provide you with a copy their resume to be included in your final Independent Practicum submission or they can choose to send it directly to the College at: registration@collegeofdietitians.org

The College will use this information in evaluating whether all individuals in your Independent Practicum were academically and experientially qualified (Standard 5 of the [Independent Practicum Standards](#)). Being registered with a Canadian provincial regulatory body ensures that the Advisory Dietitian/Supervisor is academically qualified. The Advisory Dietitian/Supervisor's resume will provide the evidence that they are experientially qualified.

Note: If the Advisory Dietitian/Supervisor chooses to send their resume directly to the College, they must include a covering note indicating that they are providing their resume in support of an Independent Practicum submission and clearly indicate your name.

Once the College receives your final Independent Practicum submission, we will verify that all of your Supervisors and your Advisory Dietitian complied with [Policies 2-11 and 2-12](#) throughout the duration of the supervisory period and/or Independent Practicum.

Appendix I

Example of an Independent Practicum Submission Table of Contents

1. Letter from Applicant [Pg. 3-4](#)
2. Applicant Resume [Pg. 5-7](#)
3. Letter from Advisor [Pg. 8-9](#)
4. Advisor Resume [Pg. 10-12](#)
5. Independent Practicum Program Evaluation Plan [Pg. 14-16](#)
6. Master List of Placements [Pg. 17](#)
7. Master List of Competencies [Pg. 18-38](#)
8. Placements:
 - 8.1. Placement 1 – Location (Clinical)
 - 8.1.1. Placement Evaluation Form [Pg. 39-66](#)
 - 8.1.2. Activity Summary [Pg. 67-73](#)
 - 8.1.3. Consent to Disclose Information [Pg. 74](#)
 - 8.1.4. Supervisor Resume [Pg. 75-78](#)
 - 8.2. Placement 2 – Location (Population & Public Health)
 - 8.2.1. Placement Evaluation Form [Pg. 79-88](#)
 - 8.2.2. Activity Summary [Pg. 89-99](#)
 - 8.2.3. Consent to Disclose Information [Pg. 100](#)
 - 8.2.4. Supervisor Resume [Pg. 101-106](#)
 - 8.3. Placement 3 – Location (Foodservices)
 - 8.3.1. Placement Evaluation Form [Pg. 107-118](#)
 - 8.3.2. Activity Summary [Pg. 119-136](#)
 - 8.3.3. Consent to Disclose Information [Pg. 137](#)
 - 8.3.4. Supervisor Resume [Pg. 138-141](#)
 - 8.4. Placement 4 – Location (Population & Public Health)
 - 8.4.1. Letter from Applicant re: her performance for this rotation [Pg. 142-143](#)
 - 8.4.2. Placement Evaluation Form [Pg. 144-163](#)
 - 8.4.3. Activity Summary [Pg. 164-171](#)

8.4.4. Placement Logbook [Pg. 172](#)

8.4.5. Supervisor Resume [PG. 172-186](#)

8.5. Placement 5 – Location (Clinical)

8.5.1. Placement Evaluation Form [Pg. 187-206](#)

8.5.2. Activity Summary [Pg. 207-217](#)

8.5.3. Supervisor Resume [Pg. 218-220](#)

8.6. Placement 6 – Location (Clinical)

8.6.1. Placement Evaluation Form [Pg. 221-240](#)

8.6.2. Activity Summary [Pg. 241-253](#)

8.6.3. Supervisor Resume [Pg. 254-256](#)

8.7. Placement 7 – Location (Population and Public Health -2)

8.7.1. Placement Evaluation Form [Pg. 257-276](#)

8.7.2. Activity Summary [Pg. 277-285](#)

8.7.3. Supervisor Resume [Pg. 286-291](#)

9. Workshop summaries and certificates [Pg. 292-302](#)

10. Declaration and Consent to Disclose Information Form for Advisor and each Supervisor
(sent directly to the College by the Advisor/Supervisors)

11. Summary Evaluation Forms [\(sent directly to the College by these Supervisors\)](#)