

# Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered

The Academy Quality Management Committee

## ABSTRACT

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals and the association that represents credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners—nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs) and registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs). An NDTR's scope of practice in nutrition and dietetics has flexible boundaries to capture the depth and breadth of the individual's practice. The NDTR's practice expands with advances in many areas, including nutrition, food production, food safety, food systems management, health care, public health, community health, and information and communication technology. The Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the NDTR reflects the position of the Academy on the essential role of the NDTR in the management and delivery of food and nutrition services. The scope of practice for the NDTR is composed of education and credentialing, practice resources, Academy Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance, codes of ethics, accreditation standards, state and federal regulations, national guidelines, and organizational policy and procedures. The Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the NDTR is used in conjunction with the Revised 2017 Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care and the Standards of Professional Performance for NDTRs. The Standards of Practice address activities related to direct patient and client care. The Standards of Professional Performance address behaviors related to the technical role of NDTRs. These standards reflect the minimum competent level of nutrition and dietetics practice and professional performance for NDTRs. A companion document addresses the scope of practice for the RDN.

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**T**HE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION and Dietetics (Academy) is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals and the association that represents credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners—nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs) and registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs). The Academy's mission is to accelerate improvements in global health and well-being through food and nutrition. NDTRs integrate research, professional development, and practice to stimulate innovation and discovery; collaborate to solve the greatest food and nutrition challenges now and in the future; focus on system-wide impact across the food, wellness, and health sectors; have a global impact in eliminating all forms of malnutrition; amplify the contribution of nutrition and dietetics practitioners; and expand workforce capacity and capability.<sup>1</sup> The Academy

is the leader in identifying the abilities of NDTRs and linking the NDTR's education, training, and experience to the valuable contributions made working with RDNs in clinical settings and applying their knowledge and skills to other practice roles and settings.

## PURPOSE

This document describes the scope of practice for NDTRs. The NDTR is educated and trained in food and nutrition science and dietetics practice. NDTRs are integral members of the interprofessional nutrition and food-service management teams. They work in employment settings, such as health care, business and industry, community and public health systems, schools, wellness and fitness centers, agribusiness, and research.<sup>2,3</sup> The purposes of this document are to:

1. Describe the scope of practice for the NDTR.
2. Convey the education and credentialing requirements for the NDTR in accordance with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and

Dietetics (ACEND) and the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).

3. Educate health care professionals, health care administrators, foodservice providers, educators, students and prospective students, regulators, business owners and managers, legislators, and the public about the NDTR's qualifications, skills, and competence, as well as roles, responsibilities and technical services provided by NDTRs.

*Approved September 2017 by the Quality Management Committee of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) and the House of Delegates Leadership Team on behalf of the House of Delegates. Scheduled review date: June 2023. Questions regarding the Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered may be addressed to the Academy Quality Management Staff: Dana Buelsing, MS, manager, Practice Standards Operations; and Sharon M. McCauley, MS, MBA, RDN, LDN, FADA, FAND, senior director, Quality Management at [quality@eatright.org](mailto:quality@eatright.org).*

The Academy's Board of Directors and Commission on Dietetic Registration have determined that those who hold the credential Dietetic Technician, Registered (DTR) may optionally use "Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered" (NDTR). The two credentials have identical meanings. The same determination and option also applies to those who hold the credential Registered Dietitian (RD) and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). The two credentials have identical meanings. In this document, the term *NDTR* is used to refer to both dietetic technicians, registered, and nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered, and the term *RDN* is used to refer to both registered dietitians and registered dietitian nutritionists.

4. Describe the relationship between the NDTR and RDN to illustrate the work of the RDN/NDTR team in direct patient/client care settings or with individuals receiving individualized medical nutrition therapy where NDTRs work under the supervision of an RDN.<sup>4-6</sup>
5. Guide the Academy, ACEND, and CDR in developing and promoting programs and services to advance the practice of nutrition and dietetics and the role of the NDTR and/or the RDN/NDTR team.

The credential *Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered* is a nationally protected title issued by CDR. The Academy's Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the NDTR applies to all, and only, NDTRs. This document does not apply to food and nutrition managers, chefs, or nutritionists with or without credential(s). The Academy publishes a scope of practice for the RDN. The RDN credential is also issued and administered by CDR and is a nationally protected title.

### WHY WAS THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR THE NDTR REVISED?

Academy documents are reviewed and revised every 7 years and reflect the Academy's expanded and enhanced mission and vision of accelerating improvements in global health and well-being through food and nutrition. Regular reviews are indicated to reflect

**Nutrition** is defined as the "science of food, the nutrients and other substances therein, their action, interaction and balance in relation to health and disease, and the process by which the organism ingests, absorbs, transports, utilizes and excretes food substances."

**Dietetics** is derived from sciences of food, nutrition, management, communication, and biological sciences, including cell and molecular biology, genetics, pharmacology, chemistry, and biochemistry and physiological, behavioral, and social sciences.

**Nutrition and Dietetics** reflects the integration of nutrition—which encompasses the science of food, nutrients and other substances contributing to nutrition status and health, with dietetics—which is the application of food, nutrition and associated sciences, to optimize health and the delivery of care and services for individuals and groups.<sup>16</sup>

changes in health care and other business segments, public health initiatives, practice guidelines and research, performance measurement, consumer interests, technological advances, and emerging service delivery options and practice environments. Questions and input from credentialed practitioners, federal and state regulations, accreditation standards, and other factors necessitated a review and revision of the following 2012 documents that were scheduled for updates in 2017:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Scope of Practice for the Dietetic Technician, Registered<sup>7</sup>;
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian<sup>8</sup>;
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2012 Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care and Standards of Professional Performance for Dietetic Technicians, Registered<sup>9</sup>; and
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2012 Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care and Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitians.<sup>10</sup>

### FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Academy documents, along with applicable state and federal regulations, state practice acts, accreditation standards, organizational program policies, guidelines and national practice informed

standards serve as guides for ensuring safe, ethical, culturally competent,<sup>11</sup> equitable, person-centered, quality nutrition and dietetics practice. Uses may include any of the following: guide career advancement, assist in self-evaluation, develop position descriptions, contribute to hiring decisions, initiate regulatory reform, or determine whether a specific activity aligns with a practitioner's individual scope of practice, such as an NDTR practicing autonomously. Core documents of the Academy that provide a foundation for the profession of nutrition and dietetics include:

- Academy/CDR Code of Ethics<sup>12</sup> (Revised and approved Code of Ethics available in 2018);
- Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered;
- Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist<sup>13</sup>;
- Revised 2017 Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care and Standards of Professional Performance for Nutrition and Dietetics Technicians, Registered<sup>14</sup>;
- Revised 2017 Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care and Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists<sup>15</sup>; and
- Focus Area Standards of Practice and/or Standards of Professional Performance for RDNs (<http://www.andjrn.org/content/focus> and <http://www.andjrn.org/content/credentialed>).

### SCOPE OF PRACTICE

For NDTRs, scope of practice focuses on food, nutrition, and dietetics practice, as well as related services. NDTRs work under the supervision of an RDN when in direct patient/client nutrition care, and may work independently in providing general nutrition education to healthy populations, consulting to foodservice business and industry, conducting nutrient analysis, collecting data and conducting research, and managing food and nutrition services in a variety of settings. The scope of practice in nutrition and dietetics encompasses the range of roles, activities, and regulations within which nutrition and dietetics practitioners perform as outlined in Figure 1.<sup>16</sup>

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