

Preparing for the Dietitians Australia Professional Examinations in Dietetics:

Guide to Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development for Dietetic Skills Recognition Candidates

2021

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Introduction

The aim of this guide is to provide overseas educated dietitians that are currently undergoing dietetic skills recognition (DSR) and DSR mentors with information on mentoring and advice on how to prepare for the Dietitians Australia Professional Examinations in Dietetics. This guide is available to members and DSR candidates via the [Dietitians Australia website](#).

Disclaimer:

- Dietitians Australia has developed this guide to provide information to overseas educated dietitians preparing for the Professional Examinations in Dietetics.
- Dietitians Australia does not in any way guarantee a successful completion of the Professional Examinations for DSR candidates who undertake mentoring.
- Dietitians Australia is not required to support candidates undertaking the activities outlined in this Guide.
- Mentoring is purely voluntary for DSR candidates and relies on self-directed learning.
- Dietitians Australia members who agree to act as mentors are doing so on a voluntary basis and are not responsible for the exam performance of mentees.

Mentoring – An Overview

Mentoring is encouraged for overseas-educated dietitians attempting the DAA Professional Examinations in Dietetics. DAA maintains a list of DAA members who have identified an interest in mentoring DSR applicants. However, please note a mentor may be any person that the DSR mentee believes would be able to assist them in preparing to sit the DSR exam.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a mutual and reciprocal relationship whereby both parties utilise reflective practice and experiential learning to develop new skills, knowledge and attitudes. 'Mentors are resource persons with whom mentees clear their thinking or sound out the validity of an important decision'.²

Reflective practice defined by Schon³, involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the same discipline, whilst experiential learning is the process of making meaning from direct experience.⁴

Mentoring is a partnership established to facilitate learning. Mentoring is characterised by the adult nature of the relationship in contrast to traditional student and apprentice relationships. Problem-solving techniques and reflective thinking are developed through the dialogue with the mentor with whom experiences and knowledge are shared.

The literature supports mentoring as beneficial at *all* levels of professional careers. In many applications, individuals may have more than one mentor to cover different work areas or expertise and different aspects of professional skills.

Mentoring is NOT supervision

Mentoring and supervision are quite different in theory but often get muddled in practice, which often leads to ineffective mentoring partnerships.

Supervision is characterised by formality and assessment. It is often driven by the needs of the supervisee to attain competence and it may be a required part of a formal or structured education, registration or credentialing process. One familiar example of supervision is dietetics clinical placement where student dietitians are assessed by supervisors who observe their demonstration of particular skills and knowledge.

Supervision has been defined as:

*'The provision of guidance and feedback on matters of personal, professional and educational development in the context of a trainee's experience of providing safe and appropriate patient care.'*³

In mentoring it is important that the partnership is one that is **voluntary**, focused on career goals and driven by the needs of the mentee which in turn drives the roles and boundaries of the partnership. **It is essential that assessment of competence is not involved.**

For more information on DSR resources go to www.dietitiansaustralia.org.au> *Working in nutrition and dietetics in Australia*> *Skills recognition in Australia*> *Process for overseas-educated dietitians*> *Exam preparation*

Effective mentors^{5,6}:

- assist the mentee to identify strengths and build on them and assist in identification of areas for growth and development
- help the mentee shift their mental context
- encourage the exploration of ideas and risk taking in learning
- clearly communicate the reasoning behind advice to mentees - helping them to think and perform as professionals i.e. ask the right questions. See Appreciative Inquiry, (Appendix 1).
- communicate knowledge by explaining difficult problems or concepts in an understandable way
- encourage mentees to feel free to ask questions, especially in new or difficult situations where an inexperienced dietitian may lack confidence
- provide guidance and remain available in stressful situations
- be honest and direct about performance

Three A's for a successful mentor⁶:

- attraction - admiration, a desire to emulate, an inspirer, a modeller, envisioner, energiser;
- action - undertaken on the mentee's behalf, a successful mentor is an investor, who believes in the mentee and communicates that belief, who invests time and energy through teaching, guiding, helping development. Different things are valued by different mentees;
- affect - a successful mentor is a supporter who provides respect, encouragement, support.

Assess your mentor potential

Darling⁶ developed a self-administered questionnaire for practitioners to measure their mentoring potential based on the three essential features of the mentor-mentee relationship she identified. See *A Guide to Measuring Mentor Potential* (Appendix 2). This tool can be used as a prompt for dietitians selecting a potential mentor from their own professional networks and for those who have been asked to act as a mentor to assess their own capacity and preparedness for the role. It is not intended as a quantitative rating tool.

Specific Mentoring Needs of DSR Exam Candidates

- The purpose of the DSR mentoring program is to assist overseas educated dietitians in achieving specific objectives relating to enhancement of skills and knowledge in their preparation for sitting the Dietitians Australia Professional Examinations in Dietetics.
- Mentees should read carefully the information (including sample exam questions) to become familiar with the scope and format of the written and oral examinations in order to identify their goals for a mentoring partnership, available on the Dietitians Australia website (*Working in nutrition and dietetics in Australia > Skills recognition in Australia > Process for overseas-educated dietitians > Exam preparation*).
- The current DSR Mentors list is available by contacting the [DSR Administrator](#).
- The mentor may be any person that the DSR mentee believes could assist them in preparing to sit the DSR exam. The mentor does not have to be a dietitian. For example if the mentee is seeking a mentor to assist with time management and exam techniques or general counselling skills other professionals may also be appropriate.
- Mentees may wish to be mentored by a dietitian who has either successfully completed the exam or who has an understanding of the issues faced by DSR exam candidates.
- There are no administration requirements for this mentoring program as it is not part of the DSR process
- The suggested duration of the DSR mentoring relationship is three to six months and **should be scheduled prior** to sitting the planned dietetic examinations.
- Mentees may wish to use a reflective practice journal to document their learning progress which has been facilitated by a mentor. See the *Reflective Practice Template* (Appendix 3).

Establishing and Managing a Mentoring Partnership

What qualities are you looking for in a mentor?

- Is there a certain type of practice, specialty, client group, employer organisation in which a mentor is most likely to have the experience that meets your needs?
- Are there specific skills, attributes or a personal style that you should look for?
- What sort of person could you most readily form an effective partnership with (perhaps identify characteristics of peers or colleagues that you might seek or avoid)?
- What modes of contact (face-to-face, correspondence, telephone or other) would best suit you? It is not necessary that the mentee works or resides in the same location as the mentor.
- Consider the attributes in A Guide to Measuring Mentor Potential (Appendix 2).
- How frequently would you like to be in contact with a mentor, how much time and at what times are you most likely to make your contacts?

Please note: your mentor does not have to be a dietitian on the Current DSR Mentors list, a dietitian who sat the Professional Examinations in Dietetics or even a dietitian, but they must be able to help you achieve your learning goals.

Be pro-active and approach a potential mentor. Knowing your needs and clearly describing them will help your potential mentor consider your request and help establish any partnership on a sound, objective-based footing. Offer to provide a copy of this guide to clarify the role and expectations. Be prepared for potential mentors to decline your request. It is better to discover that a person is unable to meet your needs at this stage rather than later. Ask the potential mentor if they can suggest someone else.

How to form a mentoring relationship

When someone expresses an interest in mentoring, offer to put your request in writing, including your specific objectives for a partnership. Ask that the potential mentor consider your request in the light of the requirements for mentoring partnerships in this guide.

If the partnership is to go ahead, it is important to establish the agreed purpose and the intended arrangements. Review the example provided in *Sample DSR Mentoring Partnership - Example (Appendix 4)*. As a DSR exam candidate, the form is a useful basis for clarifying arrangements between you and your mentor, but your partnership is not a formal arrangement with Dietitians Australia.

How to manage your mentoring partnership

There is no set way to go about mentoring. Here is an example to get you started:

1. Identify your learning goals for the mentoring partnership. This will keep you on track when meeting with your mentor for discussion. You will also find that incidental experiences will help to shape the meetings with your mentor.
2. Set yourself up with your reflective practice journal (or diary) and keep it with you as you work. Note significant milestones - challenges, achievements and as yet unresolved issues. See the *Reflective Practice Template* (Appendix 3).
3. When you contact your mentor, make sure you are prepared for the discussion by thinking through the issues you have in mind and identifying some ideas and options as the basis for discussion.
4. Make notes of discussions with your mentor in your journal. With your mentor's help, set yourself an action plan based on the issues you have discussed, and establish related targets and checkpoints for the next discussion. Review your learning goals to see if there is another 'chunk' you can tackle in the forthcoming period.

Progressive learning activity and achievement

When embarking on your mentoring partnership, as well as having overall learning goals, you will need a list of learning activities that you plan to undertake. Planning your learning this way will enable you to focus on the detail but keep heading in the right general direction. It is also helpful in providing milestones for recognising your development and achievements.

Examples of learning activities include:

- Spend some time observing a dietitian in a clinical setting to help identify any gaps in knowledge about the Australian diet and health system.
- Complete an English language class (12 sessions) to improve written English language skills.

Review, assess and set up the short term plan

Another advantage of breaking your learning down into manageable activities is that you can respond more readily to changed needs. Your periodic setting of short-term learning activities involves a review, and where necessary, a resetting of the overall plan. Your mentor can help in determining the activities to achieve your learning goals and assist you evaluate your learning.

Mentoring Partnership Troubleshooting

Mentoring partnerships are not always successful. Like any other human system, the effectiveness of mentoring depends on conducive resources and interpersonal relationships.

The three scenarios described below may lead to problems in a mentoring partnership.

Scenario 1

The mentoring relationship contact starts to become less frequent and then eventually ceases before the initially agreed conclusion.

Scenario 2

The mentee prepares for a mentoring session with their mentor by creating a list of questions that he/she expects the mentor to have answers to. The mentee works hard to get the mentor to answer the questions directly.

Scenario 3

The mentor is very excited about being asked to be a mentor. The mentor hopes to be able to change the mentee's views of the world to be more in line with his/her own.

To avoid problems, consider the below tips mentees and the following tips for mentors.

Tips for mentees

- Be honest and open, express your needs, and what you see as your strengths and weaknesses as clearly as you can.
- Be reasonable in your expectations.
- Don't always assume that the mentor will be available or will be comfortable with providing the help you want when you want it.
- Keep your mentor advised of your likely needs on their time, especially if there are peaks and lulls in your schedule.
- Don't make demands, assert your learning needs, nor what you expect the mentor to do. Present options so you can get advice on the best action you can take yourself.
- Allow space for your mentor to consider, discuss and respond to your needs in their own way.

- It is generally a good idea to keep the partnership business-like. Even if you are discussing personal issues and emotional responses, seek advice that will help you move forward rather than seeking a regular dose of sympathy.
- Do your 'homework' by preparing for your discussions.
- You are responsible for the documentation of your partnership (if applicable) not your mentor. **Remember - documentation is entirely optional for DSR candidates, however, it is recommended as a useful tool.**
- Recognise and acknowledge the support and guidance you receive.
- If you are not comfortable with the way your partnership is working out, let your mentor know early. Don't assume that the other will be aware of what is concerning you. You can probably find ways around any problems or if not, you can avoid wasting each other's time by terminating the arrangement amicably.

Tips for mentors

- The detail of mentoring discussions should be confidential unless the parties agree otherwise.
- Don't over-commit yourself or allow mentees to do it for you. Be assertive of your needs as well as recognising theirs.
- Effective mentor's help mentees find their own solutions to their problems by helping them talk it through, look at it another way, or try options or resources they hadn't considered.
- Avoid being a lecturer, a supervisor, or an assessor. It is an adult-to-adult relationship and the mentee must make and stand by their own judgements. You are not responsible for what the mentee does, nor are you required to comment to others about their competency.
- Mentees are often in a time of significant change - professionally, personally and socially. Be conscious of the overall picture and support and encourage rather than lead from the front or expect too much, too soon.
- Keep mentees advised of your availability, let them know if you will be away or, if you are busy at the time, make another time to talk or reply to their email.
- Carefully review any documentation, e.g. forms or written learning goals. Ensure as well as you are able to that mentees are fully exploring the opportunities and challenges that the work or study environment presents.

- Refer mentees to others in your network or to resources you know of when appropriate.
- If you are not comfortable with the way your partnership is working out, let your mentee know early. Don't assume that the other will be aware of what is concerning you. You can probably find ways around any problems, or if not, you can avoid wasting each other's time by terminating the arrangement amicably.

Resolve or Dissolve?

Reviewing the goals and understanding the roles of each individual in the mentoring partnership should be the first line of action. If the mentee and mentor cannot resolve problems with their partnership it may be the best option to cease the partnership and look to commence another with someone else.

Preparing for DSR Examinations through Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Overseas educated dietitians, seeking recognition of their qualification from DAA, are advised that a range of CPD activities, personally planned with the assistance of a mentor, may be useful prior to sitting the DAA Professional Examinations in Dietetics.

What is Continuing professional development?

- a *personally* planned program of learning experiences undertaken by individuals to enhance or maintain professional competency.
- a program incorporating
 - continuous self-assessment
 - the formulation of goals to enable professional development
 - the undertaking of strategies to achieve these goals, and
 - evaluation.

Engaging in 'Active learning'

Active learning occurs through the identification of learning needs, learning objectives, resources, strategies and through the provision of support, encouragement, feedback and reflective practice.

This type of learning has been demonstrated to be more effective. In general the more 'active' the CPD, where the learner is supported to undertake reflective practice or some form of assessment, the greater the opportunity for learning outcomes.¹

DSR candidates are encouraged to look for learning opportunities that bridge any gaps in knowledge, skills or recent dietetic experience in preparation for DAA's DSR Examination in Dietetics. Your learning needs will vary depending on your dietetic training background, breadth of dietetic experience and level of familiarisation with the Australian food culture and Australian dietetic systems.

DSR candidates are strongly advised to consult the Dietitians Australia website (www.dietitiansaustralia.org.au >Working in nutrition and dietetics in Australia> Skills recognition in Australia> Process for overseas-educated dietitians) for information on the Dietitians Australia Professional Examinations in Dietetics.

Candidates should familiarise themselves with the Dietitians Australia [National Competency Standards](#) prior to developing a personalised CPD plan.

CPD - Preparation for the road ahead as an APD

If DSR candidates successfully progress through the DSR process, they are eligible to join the Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) program and gain APD status.

A requirement of all APDs is that they must log a minimum of 30 hours per calendar year of professional development activities. APDs are encouraged to plan their yearly CPD program using the CPD cycle, see *The CPD Cycle* (Appendix 6).

Establishing a CPD plan in preparation for DSR examinations is a great way for DSR candidates to familiarise themselves with the CPD process and establish reflective practice before becoming APD's.

Reflective Practice

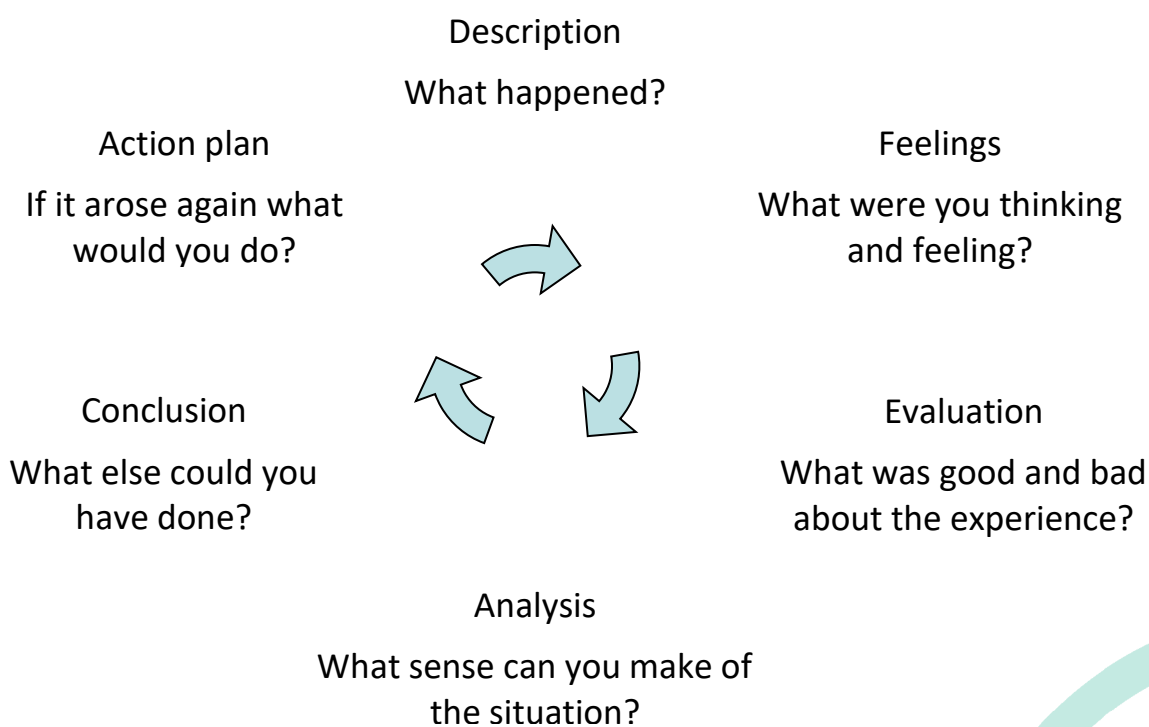
Keeping a reflective practice journal

...more than just thoughtful practice. It is the process of turning thoughtful practice into a potential learning situation. It is the utilisation of good theory in practice....and is always trying to ensure that the outcome of any action is close to what is anticipated by the theory and the previous experience combined.

Mentees are encouraged to maintain a reflective practice journal or diary during their mentoring partnership. The purpose of such a journal is to assist in personal reflection on issues influencing work, to note successes or problems, to plan solutions to problems and to review the success of planning. Exactly how you choose to set out and keep your journal is up to you.

As it is very much a personal working document it is suggested that you do not discard pages. You should be able to look back over your journal and see change. You may be able to see patterns emerge that can help you identify strengths and weaknesses. From this you might be able to determine effective approaches from past experiences that can be adapted to deal with new situations. See the *Reflective Practice Template* (Appendix 3).

The Reflective Cycle⁷



Some helpful features of effective reflective practice records include:

- clear learning goals;
- discussion of strengths and weaknesses, achievements and failures;
- links drawn between discussion of learning goals and real practice situations;
- identification of newly acquired practice skills and knowledge;
- identification of remaining problem areas to work on; and
- identification of resources to support practice and reflective discussions.

Your reflective practice journal may contain:

- a log of experiences
- a log of contacts with the mentor and brief description of these contacts including:
 - reference to a review of the previous month's learning objectives and achievements;
 - reference to key resources that were used in supporting practice and/or mentoring discussions;
 - personal learning objective priorities for the forthcoming month;
 - learning strategies and practice situations that will be sought to fulfil these learning objectives; and
 - research or other support to practical experience that is likely to help fulfil these learning objectives.

Resource Materials for DSR Candidates

Mentoring

A range of mentoring support materials can be found as Appendices 1-8 of this Guide. Please note that mentoring for DSR candidates is a purely voluntary activity and there is no requirement to submit any documentation to reference to key resources that were used in supporting practice and/or mentoring. Mentoring can be a very useful tool in the skill development of DSR candidates who are preparing to sit the Professional Examinations in Dietetics. However, mentoring alone cannot guarantee examination success.

CPD relevant to DSR candidates

Go to www.dietitiansaustralia.org.au >Working in nutrition and dietetics in Australia> Skills recognition in Australia> Process for overseas-educated dietitians. This section of the reference to key resources that were used in supporting practice and/or mentoring website is available only to DSR exam candidates. It contains useful CPD resources to help candidates get started in their examination preparation. Please note that the information is **NOT** exhaustive and candidates are encouraged to undertake further self-directed study. The information on the website should be used as a guide only and is not directly related to examination questions.

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 Appreciative Inquiry – A Tool for Mentors
- Appendix 2 A Guide to Measuring Mentor Potential
- Appendix 3 Reflective Practice Template
- Appendix 4 Sample DSR Mentoring Partnership - Example
- Appendix 5 Sample DSR Mentoring Partnership - Blank
- Appendix 6 The CPD Cycle
- Appendix 7 Mentoring Resources
- Appendix 8 Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix 1 - Appreciative Inquiry – A Tool for Mentors

Myth: Mentors need to have all the answers for their mentees.

Myth busted: Mentors may pose other questions to help their mentees see something differently

Appreciative Inquiry was introduced to some reference to key resources that were used in supporting practice and/or mentoring members who attended the 2007 reference to key resources that were used in supporting practice and/or mentoring workshop on mentoring. 'High gain' questions are recommended for use by mentors to assist in mentoring sessions. Some useful high gain questions include:

- Why are you asking that?
- Where are you going with that question?
- What do you think?
- Tell me more about
- How did you reach that conclusion?
- What was the best thing that happened?
- What have you learnt from that?
- What is the worst thing that could happen?
- Is it true? How do you know that it's true and what is your evidence?
- How do you treat yourself/others when you hold onto that thought?
- Who would you be without that thought?

Appendix 2 - A Guide to Measuring Mentor Potential

The tool below, developed by Darling, can be used as a prompt for dietitians selecting a potential mentor and for those who have been asked to act as a mentor to assess their own capacity and preparedness for the role.

	Low	High				
1. Model	1	2	3	4	5	'I'm impressed by her ability to...'; 'really respected her...'; 'admired her...'
2. Envisioner	1	2	3	4	5	'Gave me a picture of what nursing can be'; 'enthusiastic about opportunities in...'; sparked my interest in...'; 'showed you possibilities'
3. Energiser	1	2	3	4	5	'enthusiastic and exciting'; 'very dynamic'; 'made it fascinating'
4. Investor	1	2	3	4	5	'spotted me and worked with me more than other nurses'; 'invested a lot in me'; 'saw my capabilities and pushed me'; 'trusted me and put me in charge of a unit'; 'saw something in me'
5. Supporter	1	2	3	4	5	'willing to listen and help'; 'warm and caring'; 'extremely encouraging'; 'available to me if I got discouraged and wondered if I was doing the right thing'
6. Standard-Prodder	1	2	3	4	5	'very clear what she wanted from me'; 'pushed me to achieve high standards'; kept prodding me if I allowed myself to slacken off'
7. Teacher-Coach	1	2	3	4	5	'taught me how to set priorities'; 'to develop interpersonal skills'; 'guided me on patient problems'; 'said 'let's see how you could have done it better''
8. Feedback-Giver	1	2	3	4	5	'gave me a lot of positive and negative feedback'; 'let me know if I wasn't doing right and helped me examine it'
9. Eye-Opener	1	2	3	4	5	'opened my eyes, got me interested in research'; 'helped me understand the politics of the hospital'; '...why you had to look at the total impact something has on the hospital'
10. Door-Opener	1	2	3	4	5	'made in-services available'; 'included me in discussions'; 'said 'I want you to represent me on this committee; this is the information, this is our view'; 'would delegate to you'

11. Idea-Bouncer	1 2 3 4 5	'bouncing things off her brings things into focus'; 'eloquently speaks for professional issues; I like to discuss them with her'; 'we would discuss issues, problems and goals'
12. Problem-Solver	1 2 3 4 5	'let us try new things and helped us figure it out; always had a pencil and calculator'; 'we looked at my strengths and created a way to use them to benefit nursing'
13. Career-Counsellor	1 2 3 4 5	'got me started on a 5-year career plan'; 'I went to her when I was trying to sort out where I wanted to go in my career'; 'I could trust her'
14. Challenger	1 2 3 4 5	'made me really look at my decisions and grow up a little bit'; 'She'd challenge me and I'd be forced to prove my point; I found out if I believed what I recommended'

Source: Darling 1984 Darling LAW, Schatz PE. What do nurses want in a mentor? Journal of Nursing Administration. 1984;14(10):42-44

Appendix 3 - Reflective Practice Template

Activity	Reflection
Describe the activity	Reflect on your learning and professional growth in the context of the activity and competency.
Describe how the activity relates to the competency	Explain what aspects of this experience, process, or product were most useful to you in your practice. <i>This (name activity) shows my growth because</i> <i>If I could do this (identify what it is) again, I would change</i> <i>This (activity) gave me new insights because</i> <i>As a result of, I have learned how to.....</i>

Appendix 4 - Sample DSR Mentoring Partnership - Example

I.....**MARY SMITH**..... have

identified.....**ANNE BROWN**

as my mentor effective from (date)..**5TH FEBRUARY 2016**

Partnership contacts:

The proposed means (eg. face-to-face, email, phone, fax) and frequency (eg. daily, weekly, monthly) of contacts are as follows:

After an initial telephone contact, for most of the partnership our contacts will be by email. Closer to the exam period we will continue with telephone and e-mail contacts at least once a fortnight.

Learning goals:

The mentee may provide notes on the next page of this form on the following points of discussion with the mentor:

- learning goals proposed for the period of the mentoring partnership (See *Developing your CPD Plan* in this Guide).
- examples of practice situations to be sought in fulfilling these learning goals; and
- examples of research or other support to practical experience that is likely to help fulfil these goals.

Mentee statement:

This partnership is established to assist me in achieving specific educational and developmental objectives relating to enhancement of skills and knowledge in my preparation for sitting the DAA Professional Examination in Dietetics.

*I have read the *Guide to Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development for Dietetic Skills Recognition Candidates*. I have provided my learning goals and examples of practice situations and research and other support, which I have discussed with my mentor.*

Signed (mentee) **MARY SMITH** Date **5TH FEBRUARY 2016**

Mentor statement:

I (name) **ANNE BROWN** have agreed to this mentoring partnership .

I have read the *Guide to Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development for Dietetic Skills Recognition Candidates* and have discussed with the mentee the manner of contacts and the Learning Goals as detailed on this form.

Signed (mentor) **ANNE BROWN** Date **5TH FEBRUARY 2016**

Mentoring Plan

• Learning Goals

My CPD learning goals include

refreshing my clinical knowledge in an Australian context

reviewing community nutrition practice norms in Australia

developing my knowledge of Australian food service management

developing my English language skills

• Practice Situations

Spend some time observing a dietitian in a clinical environment to help me identify any gaps in my knowledge about the Australian diet and health system.

Complete an English language class (12 sessions) to improve my written English language skills.

Attend Dietitians Australia CPD events as a non-member and network with dietitians in my geographical area

Investigate possibility of doing a Food Service Management coursework unit at a university offering an accredited dietetics course

Complete variety of case studies under normal exam conditions (1 hour per case study) and discuss answers with my mentor

• Research and other support

Access the professional development support section of the Dietitians Australia website

Access other websites to broaden my research base

Access journals through University libraries or online subscriptions

Read general publications to familiarise myself with Australian food

Signed (mentee) **MARY SMITH** Date **5TH FEBRUARY 2016**

Signed (mentor) **ANNE BROWN** Date **5TH FEBRUARY 2016**

Appendix 5 - Sample DSR Mentoring Partnership - Blank

I (name).....have

identified (name)

as my mentor effective from (date).....

Partnership contacts:

The proposed means (eg. face-to-face, email, phone, fax) and frequency (eg. daily, weekly, monthly) of contacts are as follows:

.....
.....

Initial learning goals:

The mentee may provide notes on the next page of this form on the following points of discussion with the mentor:

- learning goals proposed for the period of the mentoring partnership (See *Developing your CPD Plan* in this Guide).
- examples of dietetic practice situations to be sought in fulfilling these learning goals; and
- examples of research or other support that is likely to help fulfil these goals.

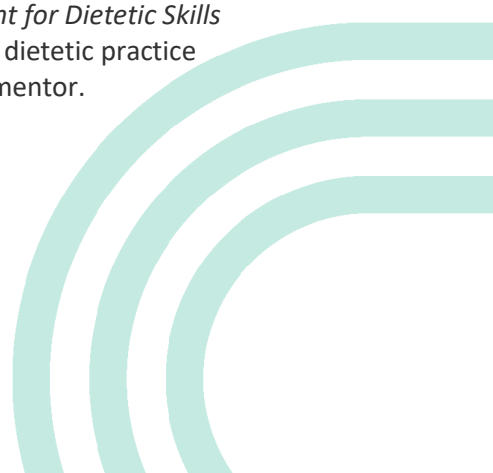
Mentee statement:

This partnership is established to assist me in achieving specific educational and developmental objectives relating to enhancement of skills and knowledge in my preparation for sitting the reference to key resources that were used in supporting practice and/or mentoring Professional Examination in Dietetics.

I have read the *Guide to Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development for Dietetic Skills Recognition Candidates*. I have provided my learning goals and examples of dietetic practice situations and research and other support, which I have discussed with my mentor.

Signed (mentee) Date

.....



Mentor statement:

I (name) have agreed to this mentoring partnership.

I have read the *Guide to Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development for Dietetic Skills Recognition Candidates* and have discussed with the mentee the manner of contacts and the Learning Goals as detailed on this form.

Signed (mentor)..... Date
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Mentoring Plan

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* Learning Goals

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* Dietetic Practice Situations

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* Research and other support

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Signed (mentee) Date
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Signed (mentor) Date
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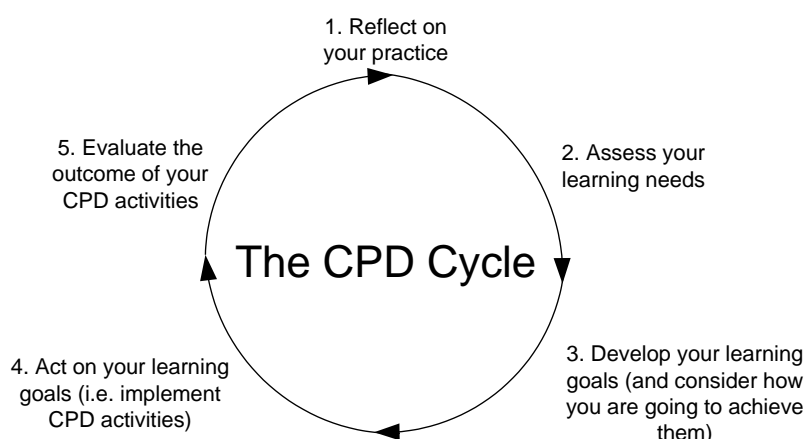


Appendix 6 - The CPD Cycle

To maximise the benefits of CPD, individuals are encouraged to develop their own personalised CPD plan. The formulation of the plan is for personal use only and is intended to provide an opportunity for professional development and self-assessment. Additionally, it may serve as a management plan for career development.

Dependent on individual circumstances, the CPD plan may be developed independently or in consultation with a senior colleague or mentor.

In order to develop your plan you are encouraged to work stepwise through the CPD cycle.



The 5 steps in the CPD Cycle

STEP 1

Reflect on your practice

Development of your CPD plan first requires an assessment of your current situation. This assessment is likely to consist of a number of components that will be influential in determining your plan.

Identify where you are now. Reflect on your skills, knowledge, attitudes and performance in the execution of your tasks. Consider these aspects both in terms of strengths and weaknesses. When assessing strengths and weaknesses it is important to provide justification for your opinions to ensure that your analysis is not over critical. Ensure that you identify knowledge, skills or attitudes that you **can** change.

Try completing the following statements:

- My knowledge of Food Service Management in an Australian setting is ...
- I try to avoid doing ...
- My recent experience in sitting exams is ...
- I would like to introduce ... into my CPD plan
- My counselling skills would be improved if I could ...
- In my country I did/do a lot of ...
- My understanding of cultural norms in Australia is ...

STEP 2

Assess your learning needs

Analyse the statements about your current practice and future plans. Consider the skills, knowledge and performance requirements for you to fulfil the identified needs.

Think about:

“What additional knowledge, skills and attitudes would help me with these activities?”

STEP 3

Develop your learning goals

Learning goals should be statements of **what you will know** or **be able to do** as a result of the learning process. The more defined and clear your learning goals are, the easier it is to identify the types of CPD activities you could undertake in order to achieve them.

DSR candidates may set learning goals related to achieving a pass in the DAA Professional Examinations in Dietetics. Examples of learning goals:

- To consult with dietitians working in a community nutrition role to gain knowledge of the Australian community nutrition and public health system.
- To consult with dietitians working in a food service role to gain knowledge in Food Service Management specific to Australia.
- To identify the similarities and differences in dietetic practice and culture in Australia compared to the country where I obtained my qualification.

STEP 4

Act on your learning goals

The implementation phase represents the translation of your learning goals into action. Undertake CPD activities that relate to achieving your learning goals. To maintain your focus it is recommended that you keep your goals in a readily visible location. Accessible and visible goals will assist you to work consistently to achieve them, or modify them, if necessary.

STEP 5

Evaluate the outcomes of your CPD activities

Evaluation is the observation and/or measurement of what has occurred and comparison with the activities and criteria that were set. Reflection as part of this evaluation process is a vital component of your CPD Plan. Besides measuring the outcomes of your activities, evaluation may also be important in providing an explanation of why your goals were not achieved. This may have occurred due to your inability to fulfil all the planned activities or due to circumstances beyond your control. Evaluation of your plan may occur individually or with the assistance of a peer or mentor.

Appendix 7 - Mentoring Resources

Online

Palermo C. Mentoring in the Private Sector Webinar 2013. Available to reference to key resources that were used in supporting practice and/or mentoring members and DSR candidates via the Member Resource Library on Dietitians Australia's website.

Books

Morton-Cooper A and Palmer A. Mentoring, Preceptorship and Clinical Supervision: A Guide to Professional Roles in Clinical Practice. 2nd Edition. Blackwell Science.

Journal Articles

Bain L. Preceptorship: a review of the literature. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 1996; 24:1-4-107.

Darling LAW, Schatz PE. What do nurses want in a mentor? *Journal of Nursing Administration*. 1984;14(10):42-44

Goldsmith M. Stewart L. and Ferguson L. Peer learning partnership: An innovative strategy to enhance skill acquisition in nursing students. *Nurse Education Today*. 2006; 26:123-130.

Kilminster SM and Jolly BC. Effective supervision in clinical practice settings: a literature review. *Medical Education*. 2000; 34:827-840

Luntley M. What's so good about placement learning?? *Postgraduate Medical Journal*. 2002; 78:637-638.

Lyth GM. Clinical supervision: a concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 2000; 31(3):722-729.

Spencer J. Blackmore D. Heard S. McCrorie P. McHaffie D. Scherpbier A. et. al. Patient-oriented learning: a review of the role of the patient in the education of medical students. *Medical Education*. 2000; 34:851-857.

Stacy R. and Spencer J. Patients as teachers: a qualitative study of patients' views on their role in a community based undergraduate project. *Medical Education*. 1999; 33(9):688-693.

Waddell D. and Dunn N. Peer Coaching: The Next Step in Staff Development. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*. 2005; 36(2): 84-89.

Walker WO. Kelly PC. and Hume RF. Mentoring for the New Millennium. *Medical Education Online*. 2002; 7:15 Available from www.med-ed-online.org

Wykurz G. and Kelly D. Developing the role of patients as teachers: literature review. *British Medical Journal*. 2002; 325(7368):818-821

Appendix 8 - Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to have a mentor before I sit the DSR exam?

No it is not a requirement - mentoring is purely voluntary for DSR candidates. *The Guide to Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development for DSR Candidates* has been developed to provide a resource for overseas educated dietitians who have been assessed as eligible to sit the Dietetic Skills Recognition exam through Dietitians Australia. The purpose of this mentoring guide is to assist overseas educated dietitians in achieving specific objectives relating to enhancement of skills and knowledge in their preparation for sitting the dietetics examination.

Will I pass the DSR exam if I work with a mentor?

Mentoring relies on self-directed learning by candidates. **Dietitians Australia not in any way guarantee a successful completion of the examinations for DSR candidates who undertake mentoring.** Dietitians Australia members who agree to act as mentors are doing so on a voluntary basis and are not responsible for the exam performance of mentees.

How do I find a mentor?

Please note - Dietitians Australia is not required to support candidates undertaking the activities outlined in this Guide. **It is the candidate's responsibility to find a mentor.**

A register of volunteer DSR Mentors can be obtained by contacting the [DSR Administrator](#). This is a list of Dietitians Australia members who have either completed the examinations themselves or feel they are in a position to assist current candidates. **However, please note a mentor may be any person that the DSR mentee believes would be able to assist them in preparing to sit the DSR exam. The mentor does not have to be a dietitian.**

If you are already in Australia, you can attend Dietitians Australia CPD events and talk to people. You may meet somebody you think would be a good mentor. Contact local dietetic services in the area in which you want to work and ask if someone would be interested.

Are there tools I can access to help me prepare for the exam?

Access the professional resources available at www.dietitiansaustralia.org.au > *Universities & Recognition of Qualifications > Recognition of dietetic qualifications > Overseas educated dietitians – examination stage > Preparing for the exam > Exam preparation resources.*

Who should I contact if I have any queries?

The DSR Administrator is the initial contact point for enquiries, problems and complaints relating to the DSR process. Telephone +61 2 6163 5200 or email dsr@dietitiansaustralia.org.au.