

How to design your Professional Development 2001 Portfolio

Soon the year 2001 will leave the realm of science fiction and become science fact, bringing challenges and change for the world and for the fields of food and nutrition. Will you be ready for it?

With the new millennium just around the corner, dietetics professionals will be coming face to face with the Professional Development 2001 Portfolio, the new recertification process for registered dietitians (RDs) and dietetic technicians, registered (DTRs). The Commission on Dietetic Registration's (CDR) Competency Assurance Panel created the portfolio to meet the demands of the future and to provide dietetics professionals with tools that strengthen the current system of professional development through self-directed, lifelong learning.

"The portfolio provides more flexibility, using an expanded definition of continuing professional education," says Rita Storey Grandgenett, MS, RD, chair of the Competency Assurance Panel. In addition to accepting conventional methods of professional development, such as seminars, workshops, computer-based learning, journal clubs, and self-study programs, several new activities will be available as options. These could include reading professional journal articles, participating in sponsored or independent learning programs or certificate programs, and serving in an elected professional leadership position. The attainment of specialty certification is also one of the many new continuing professional education (CPE) activities available. These certifications could include:

- a board certification as a specialist in pediatric or renal nutrition,
- a certification offered jointly by CDR and another organization, or
- a certification offered by another organization.

To be approved, the certification programs of other organizations need to be in areas where there is a strong overlap of the scope of dietetics practice. Some examples include certified lactation consultant or certified professional in health care quality.

The expanded list of continuing professional education activities improves the accessibility and affordability of professional development for dietetics profes-

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Sample Portfolio 1

S.F. is a retired dietetics professional who practiced for 32 years in a variety of settings, including clinical, foodservice, and wellness. Here are some question-and-answer excerpts from her portfolio.

Step 1: Professional Self-Reflection

What is my current or future practice area?

- Retirement

What are my current professional goals?

- Maintain competence in nutrition for the life cycle and wellness
- Improve public-speaking abilities

Step 2: Learning Needs Assessment

Needs that apply	Learning Needs	Level of Proficiency	
		x current novice	✓ desired expert
1.	Nutrient needs across the life span		
2.	Verbal communication skills		

Step 3: Learning Plan Development

I have identified my current CPE goals to be:

- Maintain competence in nutrition for the life cycle and wellness
- Improve public-speaking abilities

The specific knowledge and skills I need to develop to achieve my goals include:

Needs that apply	Learning Needs	Desired Level of Proficiency	
		novice	expert
1.	Nutrient needs across the life span		
2.	Verbal communication skills		

To strengthen my knowledge and skills to accomplish my goals, I plan to use these CPE activities:

- Conventional activities (seminars, presentations, self-study)
- Professional reading
- Sponsored independent learning (mentoring relationships)

Step 4: Implementation of the Learning Plan

Activity (Title/Topic and Provider of CPE activity)	Date (M/D/Y)	CPE Units	Application of Learning
Presentation Pizzazz (district association)	June 12, 1998	3	I am incorporating skills such as even pacing of the materials, and using pauses to execute presentations effectively
"Use of food nutrition labels is associated with lower fat intake" (self-study, Journal CE article)	Jan 17, 1999	1	I incorporated the information in preparation for a consumer talk on wellness

Step 5: Evaluation of Learning Plan Outcomes

- I received average scores of very good on presentation evaluations and was asked to provide additional nutrition and wellness presentations

sionals. To help individuals locate activities to meet their needs, CDR is offering a CPE database as a free service. It contains information on prior-approved programs. "CDR will provide aggregate data, including geographic-specific data, on learning interests of the profession to assist dietetic practice groups, affiliates of The American Dietetic Association, and commercial providers in program planning to meet professionals' needs," says Grandgenett.

How Will it Work?

The portfolio works by helping dietetics professionals set goals and plan the steps needed to achieve those goals. (See samples on these 2 pages.) The process includes:

Step 1: Professional Self-Reflection. Reflection helps direct the entire portfolio process by setting professional goals.

Step 2: Learning Needs Assessment. Needs assessments help identify what practitioners know now and what they need to know to reach their goals. In some cases, a goal may be to maintain expertise in an area of practice.

Step 3: Learning Plan Development. This is an individualized learning plan to map out or develop a blueprint for reaching goals. A learning plan may be focused on a specific content or area of practice, or on broad-based areas as determined by individual needs and goals. Specific CPE activities, however, do not need to be identified in this step. The learning plan is submitted to CDR for verification purposes in the first year of a new 5-year certification period. The plan can be amended or revised and resubmitted to CDR if professional circumstances change significantly.

Step 4: Implementation of the Learning Plan. This step includes the maintenance of a log of these activities as part of the portfolio. Because the professional assumes responsibility for selecting learning activities that have a direct relationship to that practice, documentation of prior or subsequent approval will not be required. RDs must achieve 75 and DTRs must achieve 50 CPE units during a 5-year reporting period, with 1 unit usually equaling 1 contact hour of activity.

Step 5: Evaluation of Learning Plan Outcomes. Portfolio documentation submitted to CDR before the end of the 5-year recertification period includes the learning plan, a log of completed CPE activities with supporting documentation, and an evaluation of learning plan outcomes. CDR will develop an on-line system as an alternative to a paper process. ■

For more information on CDR's Professional Development 2001 Portfolio, see page 612.

Sample Portfolio 2

N.B. is a clinical practitioner in an acute-care facility. He sees an urgent need for delivery of high-quality care in an outpatient setting, in particular for the general medicine population. Here are some excerpts from his portfolio.

Step 1: Professional Self-Reflection

What is my current or future practice area?

- Clinical nutrition for general medicine inpatients and an increasing number of outpatients

What are my current professional goals?

- Maintain nutrition expertise for general medicine population
- Increase knowledge of outpatient self-management training

Step 2: Learning Needs Assessment

Needs that apply	Learning Needs	Level of Proficiency	
		x current novice	✓ desired expert
1.	Medical nutrition therapy: disease management, enteral and parenteral nutrition		
2.	Nutrition needs across the lifespan		

Step 3: Learning Plan Development

I have identified my current CPE goals to be:

- Maintain nutrition expertise for general-medicine population
- Increase knowledge of outpatient self-management training

The specific knowledge and skills I need to develop to achieve my goals include:

Needs that apply	Learning Needs	Desired Level of Proficiency	
		novice	expert
1.	Medical nutrition therapy: disease management, enteral and parenteral nutrition		
2.	Nutrition counseling; self-management training		

To strengthen my knowledge and skills to accomplish my goals, I plan to use these CPE activities:

- Conventional activities (seminars, presentations, self-study)
- Posters
- Sponsored independent learning (mentoring relationships)

Step 4: Implementation of the Learning Plan

Activity (Title/Topic and Provider of CPE activity)	Date (M/D/Y)	CPE Units	Application of Learning
Advances in Medical Nutrition Therapy (state dietetic association annual meeting)	March 4, 1997	12	Incorporated the outcome measures described in my practice. From posters reviewed, collected background information on research in quality management
Nutrition counseling self-study (CDR)	August 18, 1998	7	Improving my counseling skills to attract new clients and improve follow-up visit rate.

Step 5: Evaluation of Learning-Plan Outcomes

- Increased client referrals in the outpatient setting by 7%. Improved outpatient counseling skills with improved clinical outcomes and customer satisfaction.