

The Swedish National Dietetic Association's (DRF) specialist description

Skill and competence for a specialist title intended for clinical dietitians in Sweden

Specialist fields

Since 2011 it is possible to apply for a specialist dietitian title in one or several dietetic fields, which is presented below. The different fields are based on the areas where the Swedish National Dietetic Association (DRF) already has organized reference groups. In addition, the specialist fields can be complemented with a specific orientation (focus) if the applicant wishes to be even more specific about the expert field. However, this added focus is optional. Examples of a specific orientation are indicated in parentheses below for some of the specialist fields.

Diabetes mellitus (children or adults)

Public health (primary health care or school or community work)

Gastroenterology (food allergy and intolerance)

Geriatrics

Sports Nutrition

Cardiovascular Disease

Pulmonary Medicine (cystic fibrosis or COPD)

Inherited metabolic diseases (PKU)

Nephrology

Obesity (children or adults)

Pediatric

Oncology (neonatal care)

Psychiatry (eating disorders)

Additional specialty fields may be current and proposed by a member of the Association. If the Association identifies a need to adjust the current list of specialist fields additional specialist fields can be added to the current list. The Association's specialist description is a document that continually will follow the developments within health care system and regarding the dietitian profession both nationally and internationally. When new substantial changes are presented an audit of the specialist description will take place. We suggested that the specialist title for the dietitians is presented as followed, for example on a visiting card: "*Registered dietitian specialist in diabetes mellitus*".

The aim of the specialist system

Specialist titles among dietitians aims to

- systematically develop the specific professional skills for dietitians
- integrate and develop practical and theoretical knowledge within the specialist field

Requirements to achieve a specialist title

Basic requirements

In order to apply for a specialist dietitian title following is needed:

- Registration as a clinical dietitian

A. Theoretical training

- courses at university/college in relevant fields[§] at advanced level (second cycle), at least 60 credits (1 year) including a bachelor thesis/individually performed project work of at least 15 credits, preferably a 1-2 year degree at advanced level (second cycle / Master degree).
- publications in the specialist field, preferably in peer-reviewed journal, or chapters in books, teaching materials, popular science articles in journals and / or presentation / poster at a symposium / conference related to the specialist field*.
- participation in courses, workshops, seminars, conferences relevant to the specialty (should demonstrate a continuous education and include a number of occasions).

[§] In addition to courses in the specialist field specifically, other advanced courses in general dietetics and clinical nutrition and methodology in relation to this is acceptable.

* An overall assessment of quality as well as quantity is carried out, why no exact number of publications and presentations is listed above. Articles in specialist field can be published in the Swedish National Dietetic Journal (Dietist Aktuellt). This could beneficially be addressed to the editor when the article is to be published in this journal making a peer-reviewing process possible.

B. Clinical training

- at least 5 years experience in the specialist field, which each year covers at least 50 percent service, with access to supervising, if possible.
- some sort of supervise experience, for example supervision of student dietitian during their clinical placement training, supervision of bachelor thesis//individually performed student project work or equivalent.

C. Specialist examination lecture (performed after the above have been sufficiently evaluated)

- a lecture in the specialist field[#], held at one of the departments (Higher Education Institution) that gives the program for clinical dietitian, assessed by at least two representatives from the National Dietetic Association (DRF). At least one of those representatives must hold a PhD or be an expert in the field. The lecture is also supported by a written abstract in English including relevant scientific references.

[#] The examination lecture should be performed in such a way that the specialist field is connected to and is demonstrating the following competences outcomes.

Overall competences outcomes

The specialist title means that you can demonstrate profoundly clinical competence in the specialist field. Clinical competence means knowledge and skills in dietetics and clinical nutrition in the specialist field, capacity for clinical reasoning, reflection and

decision making. In addition, basic knowledge of the organization, work planning, development and research is needed. New treatment methods and organizational changes within and outside the health care system require flexibility and quality thinking. The work requires a good understanding of the problems that might apply to individual patients or groups of patients. The specialist skilled dietitian shall act as carriers of knowledge, skills and knowledge adviser and developers as well as have an ethical and patient-centered approach.

I. Knowledge Carrier - In-depth knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Specialist competence is based on dietetics and clinical nutrition. A dietitian specialist shall

- be able to independently and in a qualified way assess, treat and evaluate the nutritional treatment and actively participate in patient investigation in the specialist field
- actively participate in developments in the specialist fields and have a thorough knowledge of quality enhancement
- follow the medical progress in the specialist field since it may lead to new treatments and nutritional guidelines
- develop and implement an evidence-based approach in the specialist field
- be able to choose adequate, valid and reliable methods for the assessment and treatment
- evaluate and reflect on ethical issues and follow the code of ethics for dietitians
- implement and follow the development of national and international standardized terminology in the field of dietetics and clinical nutrition

II. Knowledge Adviser - Information, education and supervising

A dietitian specialist shall be able to

- inform, guide and educate patients and their relatives and other members of staff about nutrition in prevention and nutritional treatment in the specialist field
- teach and supervise colleagues, students and future specialists