



**European Dietetic Education – the need
for uniform dietetic practice**

Karin Hådell

Honorary President, EFAD



EFAD -Aims

- ✿ Promote the development of the dietetic profession
- ✿ Develop dietetics on a scientific and professional level in the common interest of the member associations
- ✿ Facilitate communication between national dietetic associations and other organisations – professional, educational and governmental
- ✿ Encourage better nutrition situation for the population of the member associations and with international organisations



Education and work of dietitians 2003

- ✿ BSc programmes 16 countries
- ✿ Non BSc programmes 5 countries
- ✿ Dietetic education programmes start after 10-14 years school education
- ✿ Length of studies varied from 2-5 years (70-200 weeks) or 2124-7360 hours
- ✿ Theoretical study varied between 50-197 weeks
- ✿ Practical training varied between 0-69 weeks (0-65% of training)
- ✿ Title not protected in all countries



Education and work of dietitians

2003 (cont) Work:

- Hospitals > 50%
- Nursing homes
- Health education
- Food industry
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Staff, school or military restaurants
- Catering industry
- Community advisers
- Quality controllers
- Research (full- or part time)
- Dietetic and nutrition education of students
- Universities or colleges
- With family doctors
- The media
- Consultants

Conclusions from the 2003 survey

- ✿ The education and work of dietitians in the memberstates of EFAD is a complex and multifaceted subject
- ✿ Dietitians with the same level of education cannot necessarily work in each other country
- ✿ A majority of dietitians work in hospitals or nursing homes whatever their basic education
- ✿ There is a large variety of other areas where dietitians find employment
- ✿ The different cultures in the memberstates create different expectations from professionals, politicians and the public.
- ✿ This in turn can affect the education that is provided, the qualification gained and the work undertaken

Dietitian

- ✦ A person with a qualification in nutrition and dietetics recognised by national authority(s) who applies the science of nutrition to the feeding and education of groups of people and individuals in health and disease
- ✦ The scope of dietetics is such that dietitians may work in a variety of settings and have a variety of work functions

The Bologna Declaration

- ✦ A common goal to create a European Area for Higher Education
- ✦ A deadline 2010
- ✦ A set of specific objectives and measures
- ✦ A commitment by each signatory country to reform its higher education system

Bologna Objectives

- ✦ System of easily readable and comparable degrees
- ✦ Convergence of higher education to a system of two cycles – Bachelor and Master level
- ✦ Establishing a system of credits (ECTS)
- ✦ Mobility of students, academics and administrative staff



Salamanca 2001

- ❖ European Higher Education Institutions recognise that their students need and demand qualifications which they can use effectively for the purpose of their studies and careers all over Europe
.....and confirm their willingness to organise themselves accordingly within the framework of autonomy



Roskilde resolution

1. Agree on a description of the role of the Dietitian
2. Investigate the requirement of a minimum qualification (3year degree) benchmarked, with an ECTS rate
3. Agree a European Dietetic benchmark Statement (EDBS) including practical placement benchmark
4. Set benchmarks for teachers of dietetics
5. Agree a common language by defining technical terms used
6. National registration of dietitians to protect the title
7. Consideration to be given to registration as a European Dietitian

Roles within Europe

- ✦ **Administrative Dietitian:** focuses and works primarily within food service management with responsibility for providing nutritionally adequate, quality food to individuals or groups in health and disease in an institution or a community setting
- ✦ **Clinical Dietitian:** has responsibility for planning, education, supervision and evaluation of clinical devised eating plan to restore the patient/client to functional nutritional health. Clinical dietitians can work in primary care as well as in institutions
- ✦ **Public Health or Community Dietitian:** directly involved in health promotion and policy formulation that leads to the promotion of food choice amongst individuals and groups to improve and maintain their nutritional health and minimises risk from nutritionally derived illness



European Dietetic Benchmark Statement (EDBS)

European Academic and Practitioner Standards for Dietetics

Geneva June 2005



Purpose of EDBS

- ✦ Describe characteristics of study programme
- ✦ Represent expectations of standards
- ✦ Describe attribute and skills
- ✦ Source of reference
- ✦ Quality assurance

Focus on outcome rather than finite subjects

European Credit Transfer System

- ✦ First cycle course (Bachelor Degree) – minimum 210 ECTS
- ✦ Theoretical part – minimum 180 ECTS
- ✦ Practical component – minimum 30 ECTS
- ✦ Second cycle course – minimum 90 ECTS – 30 from practice

Practice Standards

5.1 General comments:

The practical element of the first or second cycle degree is an essential part of any qualification leading to registration as a dietitian

5.2 Specification for application of dietetics:

The practical component will take place in a minimum of two different settings:

1. Where individuals or groups are healthy and well
2. Where individuals or groups are unwell

Dietitians work in a variety of situations with a diversity of individuals and groups and it is essential that they demonstrate their dietetic capability under these circumstances



Implementation EDBS

Translated into

- ✦ 10 languages

Sent to

- ✦ 13 Ministries of Health
- ✦ 8 Ministries of Employment
- ✦ 13 Ministries of Education
- ✦ 7 Quality Assurance Agencies

- ✦ 12 countries: meetings NDA:s and HEI:s

- ✦ 9 countries: meetings NDA:s and practice educators



Dietitians Improving Education Training Standards (DIETS)

Aim:

To enhance the standard of dietetic practice through
creativity and cooperation in education across
Europe



Thematic network for dietetics

- ✦ Focus: harmonisation of curriculum, practice, competence and tools to ensure quality and effectiveness of practice.
- ✦ Application to Europe: Socrates Programme
Erasmus 3
- ✦ More than 90 partner institutions



DIETS: the Objectives

- ✿ To aid the Bologna process
- ✿ Develop the utilisation of ECTS
- ✿ Improve communication
- ✿ Develop quality indicators,
- ✿ Publicise best practice
- ✿ To facilitate sharing of knowledge and disseminated research findings
- ✿ To develop the role of the dietitian



The project:

Over 3 years

5 work plans

- ⊕ Network Management Group
- ⊕ Information Communication Technology group
- ⊕ Education Group
- ⊕ Visits
- ⊕ Dissemination group



Visits to practice

- ⊕ Available to:
- ⊕ All dietitians in Network (Year 2 = 24 exchanges)
- ⊕ All HEIs (Year 1 = 24 exchanges)
- ⊕ Student dietitians (Year 3 by electronic means)

Outputs

Output	Purpose	Achieved by
Establish European dietetic network	To exchange ideas/ information/expertise/ best practice	Meetings, documents, virtual meetings, visits, website
Procedural documents	To enhance quality through shared practice standards/ guidelines	Consultation, shared evaluation/analysis
Curriculum change	To support innovations, change, evolution of dietetic education	Mapping, discussion, analysis
Educational tools/learning materials	To encourage change in practice through applied knowledge	Posting best practice on website, meetings, visits



Conclusion

- ⊕ Dietitians and students demand a qualification they can use Europe wide
- ⊕ In compliance with the Bologna declaration the need for harmonization of dietetic education and practice has been highlighted. (EDBS and DIETS)
- ⊕ Minimum standards for theoretical and practical training have been defined
- ⊕ Work towards convergence of dietetic education across Europe
- ⊕ Harmonisation of curriculum will facilitate free movement for dietetic practitioners within Europe
- ⊕ First important steps towards a European Dietitian has been taken



Thanks

EDBS

- ✦ Professor Anne de Looy (UK)
- ✦ Birgit Josefson (Sweden)
- ✦ Carole Middleton (UK)
- ✦ Ghita Parry (Denmark)
- ✦ Liana Poulia (Greece)

DIETS

- ✦ Professor Anne de Looy (UK)
- ✦ Irene Mackay (President of EFAD 2000-2006)
- ✦ Judith Liddell (Secretary to EFAD)
- ✦ Ulrich Huhmer (Treasurer EFAD)

National Dietetic Associations and Higher Education
Institutes



www.efad.org