**Commission
on Dietetic
Registration**

the credentialing agency for the
**Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics**

CERTIFICATION TESTING PROGRAM

Specialist Practice Audit

Test Specifications

Test Item Development

New Test Item Review

Item Review

Test Item Processing

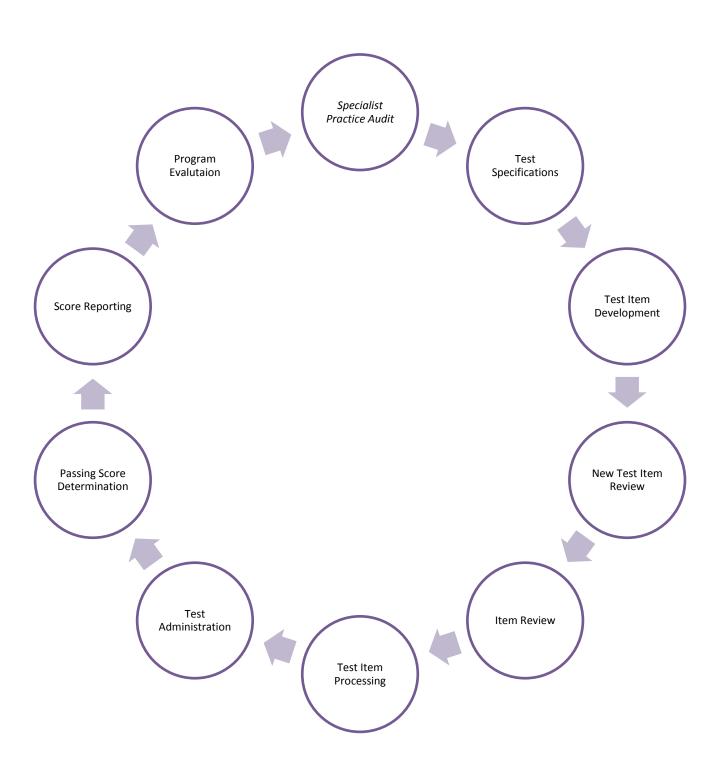Test Administration

Passing Score Determination

Score Reporting

Program Evalutaion

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. **Specialist Practice Analysis**
A specialist practice analysis describes the knowledge and skills necessary to perform competently at an identified level of specialist practice. It serves as the basis for test specification/content outline development. Using a role delineation study is among the most desirable methods for specification development, because it assists in ensuring that the certification test is job-related, representative of practice, and geared to the appropriate responsibility level. CDR conducts a specialist practice analysis every five years.

2. **Test Specifications/Content Outline**
Test specifications are a detailed blueprint for constructing a test. They include a description of the content to be tested, the proportion of the test to be devoted to the different areas of content within domains, and the characteristics of acceptable test items. Test specifications derived from the practice analysis verified by actual practice provide evidence in support of test content validity and establish its defensibility and credibility.

3. **Test Item Development**
New items (questions) are prepared by individuals selected from diverse practice areas and population subgroups who are trained in the specifics of good test construction principles. *Criteria applied to writing test items are:*
(1) relevance and criticality to minimally-competent specialist practice; (2) accuracy, currency and clarity; (3) regional and institutional differences; and (4) conformity with test specifications.

4. **New Test Item Review**
Test items are reviewed by professional test editors to eliminate technical flaws, ambiguities, and potential bias. All test items are reviewed by experienced item writers to verify appropriate classification and conformance with item writing criteria.

Editorially and technically sound items are pretested as unscored items on a test. This ensures that the scoreable portion of the test includes good performing items.

5. **Item Review**
Experienced test reviewers appointed by the Commission on Dietetic Registration review items for content accuracy, currency, relevance to minimally-competent specialist practice and one best answer.

6. **Test Item Pretesting**
Only test items that have survived content, measurement, and editorial review are suitable for inclusion in the computer-based testing item pool.

ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING

7. **Test Administration**
Eligibility requirements are established by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. The Commission contracts with a testing vendor to administer the tests on computer at over 300 test sites. Special testing needs, such as those for religious observance and physical handicaps, are accommodated under standardized secure conditions.

8. **Passing Score Determination**
A passing score study is periodically conducted by experienced dietetics professionals representing diverse practice areas and population subgroups. The use of systematic judgment of content experts in these studies establishes the minimum level of acceptable professional performance expected on a certification test. CDR uses a criterion-referenced approach for determining the passing score. This criterion-referenced passing score may become the basis for equating future examinations, thus ensuring that all test versions are of equal difficulty level.

REPORTS AND EVALUATION

9. **Score Reporting**
A score report announces the examinee's performance on the certification test. The report includes a total score as well as sub-scores in each domain.

10. **Program Evaluation**
A comprehensive technical report, which includes statistical data, is provided by the testing vendor to the Commission on Dietetic Registration. This report, along with feedback from examinees, is used by the CDR Specialist Certification Panel in evaluating the certification testing program. The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing and certification benchmarking are used as the basis for the evaluation process.