

Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify the tasks of sports dietitians as a first step in the development of a job-related certification examination. The Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) requested the services of PSI Services (PSI) to design and conduct a study that would provide the support necessary to develop specifications upon which a content valid certification examination could be built.

CDR appointed an Advisory Committee (AC) to conduct the activities necessary to identify responsibilities of sports dietitians and develop the Examination Specifications. CDR identified the need to ensure that the Examination Specifications were representative of sports dietitians and the diversity of the task force was reflective of the specialty areas practiced throughout the United States. All the members of the task force had demonstrated expertise in their respective areas of specialization.

The study involved development of a web-based practice analysis survey, distribution of the survey to target practitioners, and an analysis of their responses. Exam specifications for the sports dietitian examination were developed based on these data.

The Advisory Committee met in May 2017 to initiate the following six tasks:

1. Develop a sampling plan
2. Identify tasks and topics of knowledge for the survey instrument
3. Identify content categories
4. Determine the rating scales
5. Determine the relevant demographic variables of interest
6. Integrate demographics, rating scales, tasks, and knowledge into a survey instrument

Invitations to participate in the survey were mailed to 6,995 sports dietitians with a link to the online practice analysis and a request to forward the invitation and link to others in the field. After adjusting for undeliverable addresses (n=43) and opt outs (n=125), it was determined that approximately 7.98% of the sample provided usable responses (n=545). Among 545 respondents, 400 respondents identified themselves as sports dietitians. Additionally, those who indicated that they only had the DTR credential (n=8), and those who provided no response or said "none of the above" (n=3) for the credential question, were not included in subsequent analysis. This gives us an adjusted response rate of 5.70%. The responses to the demographic questions indicated that there were sufficient numbers of respondents in relevant groups for subsequent analysis. Approximately 95.9% of the respondents felt that the job analysis study at least adequately addressed the responsibilities of sports dietitians. In addition, respondents used all rating scales with an acceptable level of reliability.

During a second meeting of the AC in September 2017, decision rules were adopted and used to determine which tasks were appropriate for assessment, and therefore for inclusion in the final Detailed Content Outline (DCO). Application of the decision rules and revision based on candidate comments resulted in 81 tasks. It was determined that 125 multiple-choice items would be sufficient to assess these tasks and knowledge elements.