

Unlocking the potential of today's graduate dietitian: building strong systems of personal infrastructure

Introduction:

Dietetic associations across the globe have articulated their vision for the future dietetic workforce. Central to achieving this, are graduates with a strong professional identity and highly developed leadership, interpersonal and professional skills who will advocate for and lead the profession forward into the 21st century.

Aim: To explore the personal and interpersonal factors required for the modern graduate and the underpinning evidence and strategies for teaching and learning.

Methods:

This symposium will present an overview of literature relating to interpersonal skills and professionalism in dietetics, including results of a recently published systematic literature review which conceptualised and defined professionalism for nutrition and dietetics education (Dart et al 2019). An interactive approach will be adopted to explore the question: "How can we best equip our graduates for the complexity of the modern workforce and diverse work roles and contexts, whilst maintaining the quality and effectiveness of their dietetic practice, public safety and standards?". Facilitators will draw on the diversity and expertise of the international participants who will share challenges, innovations and best practice approaches to developing what are referred to as the soft skills, but are acknowledged as the hard skills – professionalism, communication, conflict resolution, reflexivity, emotional intelligence. The presenters have a strong record of collaboration and will share their own experiences of developing these skills in dietetic students.

Results:

Participants develop an enhanced understanding of theory, strategies and approaches to strengthening the interpersonal infrastructure of emerging graduates. Recent published literature exploring conceptions of professionalism in dietetics will be a platform for discussion and action. A range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies will be shared and discussed for adoption and modification into dietetic education across the international audience.

Conclusion:

Participants will leave the workshop with an enhanced understanding of the interpersonal infrastructure required for emerging graduates.