



## Code of Ethics and Conduct of the Hong Kong Academy of Accredited Dietitians

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## 1.0 Introduction

HKAAD registrants are required to comply with the HKAAD Code of Ethics. Failure to comply with the Code of Ethics will result in HKAAD dietitian being struck off the register. Members of the public including other healthcare professionals and HKAAD dietitians may lodge complaint about registrants who they consider have failed to adhere to the Code of Ethics.

### 1.1 Objectives

The Code of Ethics describes the acceptable professional behaviours of HKAAD dietitians. It provides a structure which enable HKAAD dietitians to transform his/her personal and professional values into actions. It also provides the public with assurance that HKAAD dietitians will maintain their professional competence and practice with honesty, integrity and fairness.

## 2.0 The HKAAD Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics for HKAAD dietitians encompasses the ethical principles of autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice.

### 2.1 HKAAD Dietitians must be honest and fair

HKAAD Dietitians must:

- 2.1.1 Provide accurate and truthful information in communicating with the public
- 2.1.2 Identify and manage conflicts of interest
- 2.1.3 Not use inaccurate or misleading ways to promote their services. (Detailed guidelines in Appendix 1)
- 2.1.4 Treat their colleagues and service users with fairness, honesty, courtesy, respect and good faith
- 2.1.5 Provide services within all laws and regulations applicable or related to the dietetic profession in Hong Kong.
- 2.1.6 Declare to HKAAD if they have been convicted of a criminal offence under the laws of Hong Kong

### 2.2 HKAAD Dietitians must act with integrity

HKAAD Dietitians will:

- 2.2.1 Act in the best interest of the service user
- 2.2.2 Avoid and report corruption, fraud or maladministration
- 2.2.3 Protect the health and safety of service users
- 2.2.4 Respect service users' rights, privacy and privileges
- 2.2.5 Treat individuals with courtesy and sensitivity
- 2.2.6 Respect the right of individual to make informed choices
- 2.2.7 Protect confidential information
- 2.2.8 Withdraw from professional practice when unable to fulfil his or her professional duties and responsibilities to service user and others; has engaged in abuse of substance which could affect his or her practice; been judged by court to be mentally incompetent or has a condition which substantially impairs his or her ability to provide effective service to others.

### **2.3 HKAAD Dietitians must practice safely and in the interest of service user**

HKAAD Dietitians:

- 2.3.1 Practice must be founded on evidenced based principles and up to date information
- 2.3.2 Must communicate appropriately and effectively with service users, colleagues, and other professionals
- 2.3.3 Must present information without personal bias
- 2.3.4 Must recognize that difference of opinion exists
- 2.3.5 Must work within the limitations of their own knowledge and qualifications and should make referrals to other health professionals where appropriate
- 2.3.6 Must work in partnership with colleagues involved in the care, treatment or other services provided to the service user
- 2.3.7 Must assume lifelong responsibility and accountability for personal competence and practice and partake in continuing professional development
- 2.3.8 Must be alert to the occurrence of conflict of interest and make full disclosure of any real or perceived conflict of interest
- 2.3.9 Must not invite accept gifts, monetary incentives or other considerations that affect or may give an appearance of affecting his/her professional judgment
- 2.3.10 Must ensure that they are covered by professional indemnity insurance
- 2.3.11 Must keep accurate records and store them securely

### **3.0 Review**

The Code of Ethics and Conduct as outlined in this document will be updated and reviewed by the Education and Training Committee and approved by the Council every 3 years after taking into consideration stakeholder feedback, relevant research and evidence as well as development of the dietetics profession in Hong Kong. Updates will be disseminated to registrants by e-mail within 2-4 weeks and made available on the HKAAD website within 3 months of effective date.

### **4.0 Management Endorsement**

This document has been endorsed by the Council of HKAAD.

## Appendix 1

**Guidelines on Promotion and Advertising**

HKAAD recognises and acknowledges that accredited dietitians must be visible and accessible to their service users to promote the nutritional health of the public through evidenced based nutrition practices. HKAAD dietitians may wish to advertise their services in order to provide information for potential service users to make informed decisions.

Promotion and advertising by HKAAD dietitians must be truthful, accurate, and verifiable and should not mislead the public. All forms of marketing and communications including blogs and social media should be guided by the fundamental principles of honesty, integrity and fairness.

Promotion and advertising by HKAAD dietitians **should not**:

1. Include/use individual patient/client testimonials or purported testimonials. Any example, case study or quote from people who have used a dietetic service that promote the dietitian providing or delivering the service are considered testimonials.
2. Guarantee, promote, or imply unjustified expectations about the results a HKAAD dietitian may achieved
3. Promote or imply that they are capable of achieving results not achievable by other HKAAD dietitians or by improper means
4. Endorse or recommend the exclusive use of a product or brand that maybe used or sold in their practice. HKAAD dietitian should offer at least one alternative (if available) to a specific product or brand. Including professional qualifications in an advertisement that also promotes the use of a therapeutic product may be interpreted as a professional endorsement.
5. Include services that do not fall within the HKAAD Scope of Practice of Dietitians or within their personal competence

Acceptable advertising practices which protect the public and respect client's best interests include:

1. Use of public medium for advertising services such as poster, newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs, social media which do not include individual testimonials.
2. State factual, honest information that demonstrates examples of services provided and is relevant in helping the public choose dietetic service providers e.g. use of the FODMAP diet may reduce IBS symptoms
3. Use and state verifiable information which can be easily checked for accuracy and reliability. Examples include reference to aggregate results from publicly available surveys and reports; with consent, list companies using a particular HKAAD dietitian's services on website. These services should be able to be verified by individuals for example, by directly contacting the company. Should a HKAAD dietitian include scientific information in advertising, the information should be presented (a) in an accurate manner (b) use terminology understood by the public (c) identify the relevant researchers, sponsors and academic publication and (d) should be from a reputable (peer reviewed ) and verifiable source.
4. Use business directories to advertise

5. HKAAD dietitians should maintain a record of when and where advertisements are made and retain a copy of any advertisement for at least one year after date of publication or broadcast. HKAAD dietitians should be able to verify the information contained in any advertisement if requested by the Preliminary Investigation Committee.

## References

Dietitians Association of Australia: Professional Standards and Code of Conduct  
<https://daa.asn.au/maintaining-professional-standards/professional-standards/>

Standards of Conduct Performance and Ethics  
Health and Care Professions Council, UK  
<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/>

Guidelines for advertising regulated health services May 2014  
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency  
<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/publications/advertising-resources/legislation-guidelines/advertising-guidelines.aspx>

Marketing, Sales and Conflict of Interest policy  
College of Dietitians BC  
<http://collegeofdietitiansofbc.org/home/documents/2018/QA/Qac-09-Marketing-Sale-COI-Oct-29-18.pdf>

Guidelines for self-employed dietitians and nutritionists  
Nova Scotia Dietetic Association  
[https://www.nsdassoc.ca/images/media/documents/EditedPrivate%20Practice%20Information%20Sheet\\_NSDA\\_May%202015%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.nsdassoc.ca/images/media/documents/EditedPrivate%20Practice%20Information%20Sheet_NSDA_May%202015%20(1).pdf)

Guidelines for Promotion and Advertising  
College of Dietitians Alberta  
<http://www.collegeofdietitians.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Guidelines-for-Promotion-and-Advertising-October-2018.pdf>