

## **TOWARDS A SYSTEM FOR INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITIONISTS**

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Public health nutrition as a field of practice and research internationally is increasingly developing a professional profile. Health Professional registration and certification systems are widely used in the health professions to ensure that professionals are accountable, ethical and competent in practice. This paper reports on the development of a professional certification system for public health nutritionists by the World Public Health Nutrition Association (WPHNA). The system is modelled on journal IT platform based peer-review, requiring applicants to submit a portfolio of evidence addressing key standards reflecting competency standards. Assessment is by peers derived from the WPHNA membership using consensus-based competency standards developed by the WPHNA based on earlier consensus development studies and consultations, and the system is characterised by processes for peer feedback and review. A broad pan-European consultation on this system has been conducted in 2008/9 and this consultation was extended to the WPHNA membership in early 2010, to assess the feasibility of the system in the broader global context. This paper will describe the revised system, the results of this consultation and discuss the utility and application of the system as a mechanism for enhancing the capacity of the PHN profession internationally. The implications and opportunities for Australian dietitians engaging in this workforce quality assurance system will also be discussed.

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