

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CLASS

The CHIEF CLINICAL DIETITIAN supervises dietitians, dietetic technicians, office support staff, and/or food service workers; develops policies and procedures for departmental dietary activities; and works with medical staff and food service providers to ensure compliance with standards of nutritional care. Employees in this class teach clinical care and service to dietetic interns and are responsible for providing direct clinical dietetic care to a patient caseload. All positions in this class supervise and are excluded from collective bargaining.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

This is a single classification and not currently part of a series of classes.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Clinical Dietitian directs a comprehensive nutrition program for the care and treatment of patients within an institution or as outpatients of an institution and also direct the teaching of nutritional care to dietetic interns. Positions in this class affect the health care and dietetic intern instructional operations of an institution and the members of the public who are served by the institution.

- 1. Departmental Supervision.** Typical tasks: interviews and hires clinical dietitians and dietetic technicians to fill vacancies as necessary; assigns program specialities such as renal, pediatric, or surgery to department dietary staff based upon knowledge, training, and experience; reviews departmental workload and assigns work or changes assignments according to patient load and staff availability; provides or arranges for training and skills development of staff; coordinates the work of the dietary department with other departments, units, or sections for efficiency and optimal service to patients; prepares and signs performance appraisals and administers a discipline program.
- 2. Policy and Procedure Development.** Typical tasks: meets with physicians, nurses, and administrators to develop or revise policies and procedures which relate to patient care or require interaction with other departments; issues written and oral instructions governing work procedures of the dietary unit such as record keeping changes; develops standards for quality and quantity of work and reviews standards with institution administrators; explains established work policies and procedures to dietary staff; develops quality assurance plans to measure compliance with institutional standards of care and State or Federal program guidelines as applicable.
- 3. Staff Development.** Typical tasks: schedules professional development activities such as in-service training, continuing education seminars, and professional conferences for department staff; authorizes purchase and subscription to professional and research literature.
- 4. Nutritional Assessment.** Typical tasks: consults medical, nursing, and social service staffs concerning problems affecting patients' food habits and needs; interviews patients to obtain dietary history, food tolerances and allergies, and social information such as food preparation habits and cooking facilities; inquires about food preferences and chewing or swallowing difficulties; reads patients' charts and medical records to obtain medical information such as height, weight, laboratory test values, diagnosis, medications, medical history, and diet order; analyzes data to determine nutritional status of patients.

5.Nutritional Care Plan Development. Typical tasks: studies physician's diet order and meets with physician as necessary to discuss revisions or augmentations such as vitamin therapy; selects types and amounts of food for therapeutic diets based on indicated physiologic and psychologic needs of patients and integrates them with basic institutional menus and patient food preferences; determines mode of feeding for infants or patients with chewing or swallowing difficulties; prepares home diet plans for outpatients or patients leaving the institution.

6.Nutrition Care Plan Follow-up. Typical tasks: inspects meals served for conformance to prescribed diets and standards of palatability and appearance; visits patients on ward or specialty rounds and during clinical appointments to note patients' responses to diet program; calculates and records dietary intake of patients on medical records; modifies nutrition care plan as necessary; provides patient with follow-up training on such topics as nutrition, food preparation, and record keeping; may assign food inspection, nutrition calculation, and record keeping duties to dietetic technicians.

7.Nutrition Instruction. Typical tasks: educates and assists patients and families in how to choose meals from a modified therapeutic selective menu; provides and explains materials and publications which are given to patient in support of the nutrition care plan; participates in in-service training program demonstrating and explaining such topics as feeding methods and nutrition assessment methods to physicians, interns, and nursing staff; some employees in this class provide on-the-job training to give clinical experience to dietetic interns or nutrition fellowship students; assists internship director with development of curriculum and study guides; conducts classroom training sessions for interns and students.

The Chief Clinical Dietitian makes final decisions regarding allocation of department resources, hiring of staff and work schedules and defers to an administrative superior regarding policy decisions with institutional or agency-wide scope.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Employees in this class have daily contact in person with (1) patients to evaluate nutritional needs and provide nutrition information, training, and follow-up of ongoing treatment, (2) physicians, medical students, and nurses to exchange patient medical information and discuss nutrition care plans and (3) social workers and visiting nurse representatives to consult regarding home care, extended care, and treatment follow-up. They occasionally have meetings with internship directors, patient advocates, and administrative or professional committees to discuss and plan ongoing programs. Employees in this class meet at least quarterly with nursing administrators, department chairpersons, pharmacists, and other medical groups to discuss and review policy and procedure, manual changes, and accreditation issues.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Employees in this class receive general supervision from the director or associate director of a Food Services Department. Employees at this level do not receive specific assignments of daily work but rather use their initiative, experience, and training to supervise departmental functions and apply proper professional procedures to patient evaluation and care. Work is reviewed upon completion by the director or associate director mainly through reading of reports, reviewing audits, and discussions with the employee, department directors, or medical staff. Work is reviewed for compliance with policy and procedures of the food and nutrition department; the institutional standards for patient care; agency or institution personnel policies and procedures; and collective bargaining agreement.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

Employees in this class exercise direct general supervision over up to eight clinical dietitians and dietetic technicians who assess the nutritional requirements of patients and design therapeutic diet plans to meet those requirements. Employees in this class also directly supervise up to six clerical specialists who, working as diet aides, record patient information, maintain patient files, and provide clerical support to the department. Employees in this class assign and review the work of subordinates directly or may delegate the assignment and review of work performed by technical staff to clinical dietitians within their area or specialty.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Positions in this class are primarily found in hospitals, clinics, or other health care facilities. They require the willingness to work in the environment associated with the position's location and purpose. In addition, they require the willingness to maintain a sympathetic and understanding attitude toward mentally ill, mentally retarded, handicapped, and/or physically ill patients. Some positions require the willingness to work overtime, on-call, and/or rotating schedules.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES (KSA)

Extensive knowledge of the principles and practices of dietetics and nutrition.

Extensive knowledge of nutrition and dietetics as applied to health and disease.

Extensive knowledge of nutritional reference sources.

General knowledge of human anatomy and physiology as related to nutrition.

General knowledge of the effects of medications and other treatment modalities on diet, ability to eat, and nutritional status.

General knowledge of JCAHO and institution standards of patient care.

General knowledge of basic food science, preparation, and service systems and management.

General knowledge of sanitation and food handling principles.

General knowledge of safety and accident prevention principles.

General knowledge of medical terminology.

Basic knowledge of program accreditation requirements.

Skill in observing and interviewing patients to obtain needed information.

Skill in educating and counseling patients and their families regarding proper nutrition, food selection, and preparation.

Skill in locating and using nutritional information sources.

Skill in reading and interpreting physician's orders and verifying appropriate diet.

Skill in charting nutritional consults and/or nutritional care of patient.

Skill in applying the knowledge of dietetics and nutrition to the development of therapeutic diets.

Skill in interpreting laboratory data to develop nutritional assessments.

Skill in functioning on a treatment team as consultant on nutritional care

of patient.

Skill in interpreting and applying research information to existing dietetic programs.

Skill in developing nutritional care manuals and educational or informational materials.

Skill in communicating with medical and nursing staff, patients, and families about nutrition and dietetic issues.

Ability to supervise (e.g., hire, train, assign and review work, motivate, prepare performance evaluations, and handle disciplinary actions).

Ability to conduct staff meeting and communicate agency policies and procedures.

Ability to plan, organize, and evaluate the work of subordinate staff.

Ability to use and utilize information and data from automated systems.

Ability to write monthly reports about section's activities, accomplishments, etc.

Some positions in this class may require the following:

Skill in applying the principles and practices of renal dietetics, pediatric dietetics, or nutritional support.

NOTE: The KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS are required for initial consideration. ABILITIES may be required for initial consideration, at any time during the selection process, or during a trial service period as a final stage of the selection process. Some duties performed by positions in this class may require different KSA's. No attempt is made to describe every KSA required for **all** positions in this class. Additional KSA requirements will be explained on the recruiting announcement.

Adopted 1/90

Revised

Examples of work are typical of duties assigned to this class. No attempt is made to describe every duty performed by all positions in this class.