

New Grad Guide

2022





WELCOME TO BEING A *Dietitian*

Congrats! You're on your way to being an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD). As a dietitian you have the unique opportunity to improve the health, nutrition, food choices and food environment for individuals and the community. Your university degree has provided you with the clinical nutrition knowledge and a many transferable skills which you can now apply to the world of dietetics. As a dietitian, you can work across many settings, some of these include:

- Hospital and rehabilitation centres
- Private practice (medical centres and multi-health clinics)
- Public health programs
- Community and Not for Profit organisations
- Disability Sector
- Food industry and food service
- Health promotion
- Media and communications
- Management and administration
- Research and academia

Dietetics is not a one-size-fits-all career and there any many avenues to pursue and try, so when you are looking and applying for work, be sure to take all opportunities that you can and apply for as much as you can. If you are unsure what certain areas of dietetics look like, we have collated a range of Dietitian Journeys and advice from dietitians that have paved a path in across a range of fields in dietetics, check out these [Journeys on the Dietitian Life website](#).

Regardless of your journey, your first year as a dietitian will be exciting, rewarding and make you grow as a professional and as a person. Before you start, here is our top 10 tips for new grad dietitians:



01 //
SAY YES TO OPPORTUNITIES

Saying yes to all opportunities you can will allow you to be exposed to and gain experience in as many areas of dietetics as you can.



02 //
BE WILLING TO TRAVEL

Securing full time work in a major city is difficult as a new grad. Being willing to move to a regional or rural town will make it much easier to secure a full-time job and may provide the opportunity for faster growth as a dietitian.



03 //
DON'T PIGEONHOLE YOURSELF TOO EARLY

Many dietitians want to find their niche straight away, but as a new grad it's important to learn how to become a well-rounded dietitian first. Seeing a diverse range of clients will allow you to build a solid base knowledge and will make you a better dietitian.





04 //

WORK HARD

There is no way around it, during your first year – you must work hard. There is a steep learning curve, but things will get easier if you're willing to put into the work and surround yourself with support. better dietitian.



05 //

**BE PATIENT -
ACCEPT THE FACT
YOU MIGHT SUCK**

Nobody expects you to be the world's best dietitian straight away! Remember it takes exposure, repetition and time to be great.



06 //

SEEK FEEDBACK

Seeking regular feedback or shadowing as a new grad dietitian is important to ensure you are developing good habits early, developing at the rate you should and becoming the best dietitian you can be.



07 //

**LOOK AFTER YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH**

The combination of dietitians often being perfectionists, a new full-time workload, extra PD to complete, not being efficient with work yet and maybe feeling isolated upon moving or without professional support, can all play a big toll on your mental health. You will not be able to effectively look after your clients and be a great employee if you are not taking care of yourself first. If you know you are your own worst enemy, reach out to a supervisor or manager and allow them to help set boundaries for you and help you stick to them.



08 //

PLAY TO YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS

Don't make the mistake of dwelling on your shortcomings whilst ignoring your more positive attributes. Identify your strengths so you can include them in your professional style and market your abilities and services around them. You will not be able to effectively look after your clients and be a great employee if you are not taking care of yourself first. If you know you are your own worst enemy, reach out to a supervisor or manager and allow them to help set boundaries for you and help you stick to them.



09 //

LEARN HOW TO BE FLEXIBLE IN YOUR WORK

As a dietitian, you will come across clients with a variety of different needs, problems and goals, so it is important to be flexible in your approach, broaden your knowledge and work dynamically to provide them with the best advice for their particular situation.



10 //

KEEP A POSITIVE MINDSET

Focusing on the positives and having an optimistic attitude will undoubtedly shine through your work and help clients feel comfortable and trusting of your services, and help you get more enjoyment in your day-to-day.

More details on each tip are provided on [How to Succeed in your First Year as a Dietitian!](#)

BECOMING AN ACCREDITED PRACTISING *Dietitian*

The [APD Program](#) is a credentialing program designed to ensure a consistent standard of practice amongst Australian dietitians. APD is the only credential for dietitians recognised by the Australian government for Medicare and Department of Veterans' Affairs purposes, some private health insurers, and many state governments. The APD program is conducted through Dietitians Australia (DA) and demonstrates you are qualified and safe to practice.

Although it is not an absolute requirement that you're an APD for ALL dietetic jobs, it is a requirement for the very large majority of private practice jobs.

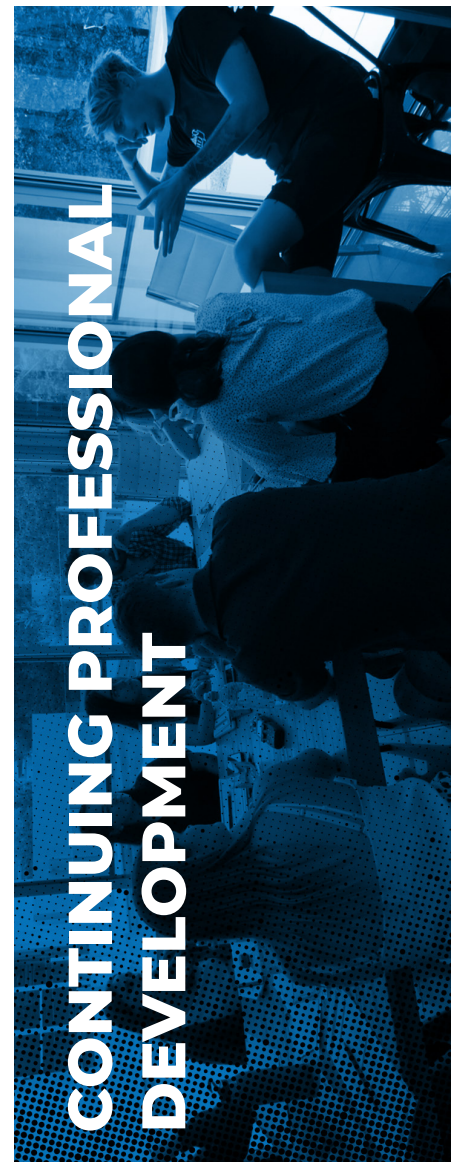
THE PROVISIONAL APD PROGRAM

The APD program involves an annual membership with Dietitians Australia, logging your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and maintaining the practice standards outlined by DA. There are many membership options with different annual rates depending on your life, employment or study situation, including a discounted rate for dietitians seeking work or doing unpaid work. More information on the APD Program criteria and requirements can be found on "[The APD Program](#)" document.

Once you complete your studies and graduate, you then must apply for Provisional APD status with DA. Once approved you will enter the APD Program and be classified as a 'Provisional APD'. This classification is for DA purposes only and does not need to be documented to third parties unless specifically requested, such as when applying for certain jobs.

As part of the Provisional APD Program, you will:

- Enter a mentoring partnership with a Full APD and commit to meeting at least once a month for a year
- Complete at least 30 hours of CPD activities per year



THE MENTOR-MENTEE PARTNERSHIP

Mentoring is a mandatory component of the Provisional APD program. You are expected to meet your mentor for at least one hour per calendar month either face-to-face or via zoom or other video platforms. This is to be conducted over a minimum of 12 months but within 2 years. You may meet more frequently but extra meetings in the same calendar month won't be counted towards your hours. You are also encouraged to maintain email and phone contact between meetings as needed.



Learning from experienced practitioners is a great way for new dietitians to build their knowledge and gain insight into the dietetic industry. You and your mentor use reflective practice and experiential learning to develop new skills, knowledge and attitudes. Your mentor is not there to feed you answers from a platter, rather help you brainstorm ideas and find solutions to career challenges by offering insight and assistance.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A MENTOR



01 //

LOCATION OF YOUR MENTOR

Location of your mentor may be important – consider what is best for you, whether face-to-face contact is more valuable or if you're comfortable with a remote mentor.



02 //

DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE A JOB

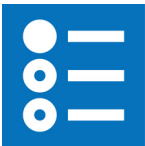
Do not wait until you have a job - Find a mentor sooner, rather than later. They can advise you on carer and job opportunities, and may help build connections, as well as giving you advice on resume writing and interviews.



03 //

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Suss out who it is you are looking for and seek out who they are first. Their employment pathway, experience, ethical standing, social media engagement and position on certain topics as these will be critical to the success of the partnership. Check LinkedIn, any professional social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) or their website.



04 //

CHOOSE WISELY

This a no brainer, but choose a mentor that is going to support the area of practice you want to work in and where you see yourself.



05 //

GO WIDE FIRST

Hit up (email, call, message on socials) as many potential mentors as you can, as it is common for you to cycle through many potential mentors before you find the right fit.



06 //

ENROL IN DA'S 'MENTOR MATCH'

Check out and enrol in DA's '[Mentor Match](#)' to search for available and suitable mentors.



07 //

READ OUR GUIDE

Read our guide – "[How to Find a Mentor](#)" for more advice.

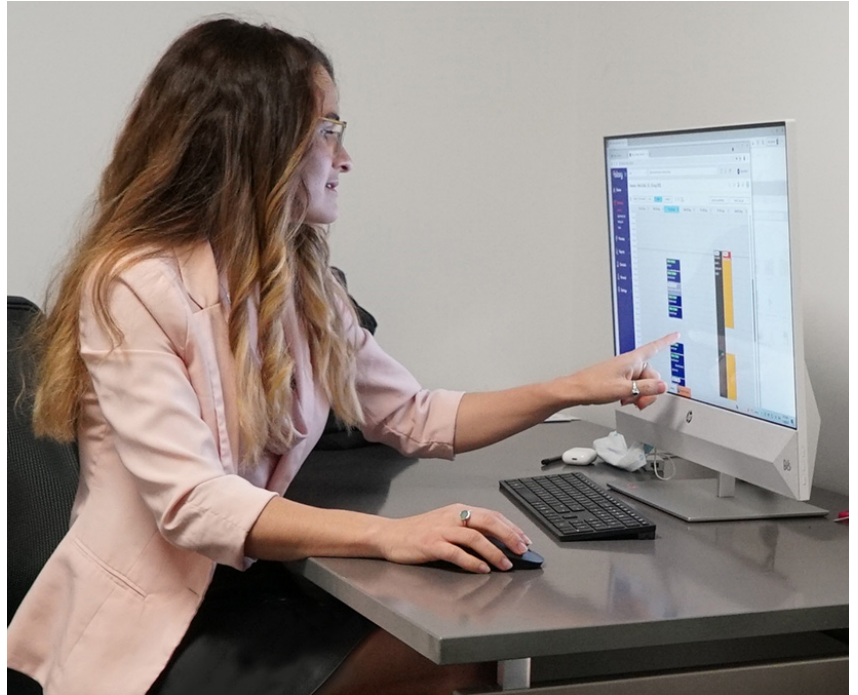
More information on your responsibilities as a mentee, preparing for and documenting our meetings and transitioning to full APD status is detailed found on our "[The APD Program](#)" document

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a full APD, you'll continue as a member of the APD Program to maintain your credentials. This involves completing at least 30 hours of CPD activities per year and maintaining a minimum number of practice hours.

Not only is CPD important for maintaining your APD status, but it is also an important part of continuing to develop your nutrition knowledge, improve client outcomes and maintain engagement and enjoyment in the ever-growing world of nutrition and dietetics!

Through our Dietitian Life Professional Membership you have access to extensive information and summaries on free and paid professional development opportunities in different areas of dietetics.



[**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MEMBERSHIP**](#)

GETTING YOUR FIRST JOB AS A *Dietitian*

Dietetics is a competitive job market, especially for full time roles – check out the [“How to Get a Job as a Dietitian”](#) document for tips on where to look and additional information on writing a resume and conducting an interview.

WRITING YOUR RESUME

It is best to have a template CV developed in advance detailing your qualifications, experience and relevant information, however it is important to tailor your resume for each role you are applying for. Some key tips for resume writing include:

- Include relevant information only.
- Ensure there are no obvious grammatical or spelling errors.
- Find out who you are applying to and address it specifically to them.
- Research the company and talk to their values.
- Address the criteria of the ad throughout.
- Include any relevant volunteering or work experience near the top of your resume, as will help you stand apart from other new grads.
- Mention your student placements in a couple of lines, with additional detail for unique experiences.
- Limit to two pages, or follow instructions provided in the ad.
- Save your Resume as a PDF titled with your name, not the job title.
- Apply literally everywhere – you can always find your “dream role” later.

WRITING YOUR COVER LETTER AND ADDRESSING SELECTION CRITERIA

When applying for jobs you will be required to submit a cover letter or response to the selection criteria or desired experience in the ad. Cover letters should be individually tailored to each role and criteria. You need to be able to outline your statements of skill against the selection criteria to demonstrate to the selection committee that you have the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience to do the job. In our document “[How to Address Selection Criteria](#)” helpful for when writing cover letters, but here are some key tips:

- Find out who you are applying to and address it specifically to them.
- Include a brief introductory statement about yourself and outlining how/why you meet the criterion.
- Play to your strengths – talk about what parts of the job you are good at doing.
- Go through each criterion carefully and highlight the key words. Reflect their word choice and terminology in your letter.
- Brainstorm ideas for each criterion and write down all your relevant knowledge, skills, abilities, training, and experience. Remember it doesn't have to be from your current role or from placement. You can draw on experiences from a previous role, even if this wasn't purely a dietetics role.
- Focus on your key achievements and be outcome focused. Don't just include what you did, but what the results were. Evidence is key!
- Mention any relevant qualifications and training you have, particularly if your experience is limited. E.g. attended conferences, workshops, watched webinars.
- Save your cover letter as a PDF titled with your name, not just the job title.

SURVIVING THE JOB INTERVIEW

Interviewing can be hard, however being prepared will allow you to put your best case forward to be hired for a role. Our document [How to be Successful in a Job Interview](#) goes through advice for before, during and after the interview. Some key tips include:

BE PREPARED

Be prepared! Review the job description and research the company and interviewers. Bring with you any required documentation, dress appropriately and ensure you are on time with the appropriate technology (especially with an increase in Zoom/video interviews).

Don't forget about non-verbal communication! Maintain positive body language, keep calm and speak slowly.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

ASK QUESTIONS

Ask questions! Show you are interested in the role by preparing some questions to ask – whether about workplace culture, specifics within the role, discussing pay or whether you can provide additional information or an alternative answer within the interview.

Confirm the next steps! Find out whether they will be contacting both successful and unsuccessful applicants, get an idea of timeframes and know who to contact and how to receive feedback following the interview.

CONFIRM THE NEXT STEPS



WORKING AND SUCCEEDING IN YOUR FIRST JOB

Yay! You officially have your foot in the door and are working as a dietitian. It's important to remember there is still a steep learning curve ahead, both in your nutrition knowledge but also in business and transferable skill development. Take advantage of the support networks available to you, including [Dietitian Life](#), your peers and colleagues, your DA mentor and family and friends to help you succeed and enjoy your first job as a dietitian.



A key component to succeeding and surviving the steep learning curve within your first job is accepting the fact it will be hard at the beginning – but with hard work, repetition and the right clinical resources, you will quickly find yourself building confidence and achieving positive outcomes in your role. Being prepared for what to do with clients or different aspects of your job, will help develop that confidence sooner. Dietitian Life has developed a few key resources to help you succeed as a dietitian.

GETTING STARTED AS A *Dietitian*

Let's be honest, unless you secured a job before you graduated, you don't know where you could be working so it is important to be prepared for all!

For that reason we would highly recommend that you get yourself setup for if you get offered a job in private practice. Working in private practice brings about a lot of different initial administration that you don't get when working in a hospital, like obtaining insurance, registering for a Medicare provider number and possibly registering for an ABN. But don't worry, we have a step by step guide to get you started!

Check out and download the "[Essential Private Practice Checklist](#)" to help guide you through getting yourself set up as a dietitian. If you are to ever work in private practice, this checklist steps you through the various activities and requirements to help you succeed from the start!

REGISTERING FOR A MEDICARE PROVIDER NUMBER

If you are not working in a hospital, you will need to [apply for a Medicare Provider Number](#) in order to see clients. This provider number is a number that uniquely identifies you and a requirement in order to bill clients under Medicare, DVA or private health insurances. Provider numbers are location specific, but you can have multiple provider numbers at any given time to represent the various locations you may work from.

Applying for an initial provider number should be done AS SOON AS POSSIBLE as it can be a lengthy process (sometimes 6-8 weeks) and you (or your employer) will not be able to process any payments and receive reimbursements for services until your provider number is received.

More information on applying for a Medicare Provider number and the necessary forms are found on the [Health Services website](#). Further step-by-step support, and additional information including for private health funds/DVA, registering with PRODA and applying for additional provider numbers, is available through the [Dietitian Life Professional Membership](#).



REGISTERING FOR PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Dietetics is a self-regulated profession, which means you will need professional indemnity insurance before you start work. Professional indemnity insurance indemnifies dietitians for their legal liability to their clients and others relying on their services. It provides cover against the costs of being found liable if a client suffers a material, physical or monetary loss that is directly attributed to negligent acts by you.

If working in private practice, it is essential for you to purchase your own insurance from a registered insurance company.

Some workplaces, including government institutions, may include you in their insurance policy – but it is always best to check this with your employer. We definitely recommend you wait to purchase insurance until you actually get a job in private practice – we know how broke most students are when they graduate!

If you're unsure and want support in choosing an insurance policy, access our document [How to choose Professional Insurance](#) for more detailed advice.

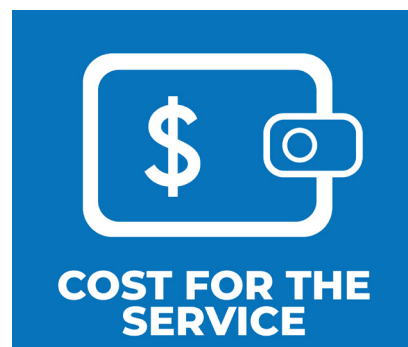
REGISTERING FOR AN ABN

You may be required to get an ABN to work as a contractor dietitian or for your own business. Registering for an ABN is free and straight-forward through the [Australian Business Register](#). The application process can take up to 14 days, but once approved you will receive your 11-digit ABN to use when invoicing.

This is also important as it may speed up the process for future employers in sending you a contract and showing them that you were prepared. There is no cost, so there is nothing to lose in getting one right now!

INVOICING

You may be required to issue invoices as a dietitian, either to clients for your services, or external companies for the work completed. In order to do this is important to include at least the following information on your invoice template;



We are not accountants, so this information is general only. Please check with your small business accountant or check the [Australian Taxation Office](#) has further information on invoices and invoice requirements if you need further information.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

As a recent graduate, we strongly suggest that you work for another business or employer prior to starting your own dietetic business. However, we understand owning and running your own business is an ambition many new grads may strive for and if this is your chosen pathway, it is important to research, be prepared and equip yourself with the right supports. Access our free resource on "[How to find Business Support](#)" to help get you started legally and professionally.



Dietitian Life can also further support you in your business at a very low cost through our Dietitian Life Business Membership which includes documents on how to start your business, writing a business plan, marketing to GPs and developing marketing plans, accessing business grants, how to increase your business know-how with a glossary of terminology and much more! Sign up for the business membership before Dec 18th and you will also get a 30min business strategy session with Tyson Tripcony from Dietitian Life, to help guide you and your business to early success.

HOW TO KEEP *Learning* POST-UNI

When it comes to working as a dietitian, your education doesn't stop when you finish your degree. In fact, a key element of creating a long and successful career as a dietitian is the time and energy you put into your learning and ongoing professional and clinical growth.

EVENTS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR

There are always new and different events and conferences run each year depending on your interest areas, but some key, consistent organisations that run annual events to keep an eye on include:

- Annual Dietitians Australia Conference
- Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine (ASLM) Conference
- Nutrition Society of Australia (NSA) Annual Scientific Meeting
- National Eating Disorder Association/Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders Conference
- International Congress of Dietetics
- Dietitians Week and Dietitians Day
- New Zealand Dietitians Conference
- Australia and New Zealand Metabolic and Obesity Surgery Society

PAID PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are extensive training and development events and conferences in various areas of dietetics to help you upskill, including but not limited to:



SPORTS NUTRITION



PAEDIATRIC NUTRITION



PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY NUTRITION



GASTROINTESTINAL DISORDERS



EATING DISORDERS



WEIGHT MANAGEMENT



BUSINESS AND MARKETING

PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND CLINICAL TOOLS

Practising as a competent dietitian is not only about knowing information, but also knowing where to find information. To help you feel equipped on what information is available for you and how to access it, we have created an extensive [List of Resources for Dietitians](#) resource, with some links summarised here.

WHERE TO FIND: CLINICAL PRACTICE TOOLS

- [Practice Evidenced-based Nutrition \(PEN\) Guidelines](#)
 - [ESPEN \(European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism\) Guidelines](#)
 - [National Health and Medical Research Council](#)
 - [National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence \(NICE Guidelines\)](#)
 - [Dietitians Australia](#)
 - [Australian Clinical Practice Guidelines](#)
 - [AusPen](#)
-



Further resources including useful websites and professional development opportunities, as well as additional information on the above links with specific information/details provided and costing is available on the full [List of Resources for Dietitians](#).

OTHER FREE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCES

DIETITIAN LIFE

[Dietitian Life](#) provides education blogs, resources, videos about everything and anything about being a dietitian. These include research summaries, clinical case studies, business tips and client education resources. Also be sure to follow us on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube for more free advice!



EDUCATION IN NUTRITION

[Education in Nutrition](#) gives you access to hundreds of free (and paid) nutrition lectures, case studies and webinars on a range of nutrition topics presented by expert dietitians. New content is uploaded each week. They also have a free weekly newsletter which includes weekly nutrition updates.

PRACTICE BASED EVIDENCE IN NUTRITION (PEN)

[PEN](#) is an online database of evidence-based nutrition research summaries, resources and guidelines. If you are a full member of DA, you receive free access to PEN as part of your membership costs.

DIETITIANS AUSTRALIA LEARNING

DA has a [Complimentary CPD for Members](#) section in which you can access free webinars, 'I'm a Dietitian' podcast, research bites and a 'how to' series which provides insights from anything from 'running a community event' to 'successfully growing your practice'. You must be logged in to the DA website to access.

NUTRITION EDUCATION MATERIALS ONLINE (NEMO)

[NEMO](#) (developed by QLD health dietitians) provides access to free evidence-based education materials and resources for patients on a wide range of topics. For more, please check out our long list [here](#).

DIETITIAN LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Dietitian Life has just launched a new membership platform designed and specifically created to support and develop dietitians and provide resources that are step-by-step guides which remove the confusion, stress and anxiety from every dietitian and give them the confidence to be successful.

There are FREE, Professional and Business membership levels. As a new grad, the free membership is a great place to start. Just click the link below and start getting access to the resources you need to be the most successful as a new grad!

SIGN UP

So what can you find on the website? Check some out below.



HOW TO GUIDES

As dietitians, it is important to follow evidence-based practice and be adaptive to the wide number of clinical conditions we may be presented with. Dietitian Life's clinical How To Guides systematically step through the Nutrition Care Process and recommendations for the management of a number of commonly seen medical conditions, ranging from weight management to chronic diseases to gastrointestinal conditions to working with athletes.

Check out our free [How To Guide – Dyslipidaemia \(High Cholesterol\)](#) resource to help support your practice when working with clients with this condition.



PRACTITIONER KITS

Resources, including client education resources, are important tools in clinical practice to improve client education, self-efficacy and results. Starting off without resources, or swapping and changing between resources, can leave you feeling unequipped and may impact your professionalism as a practitioner. The team at Dietitian Life have developed a range of resources you can use with clients to improve client education and results. All resources have been recently updated and will continue to be based on the latest scientific evidence. They are most suitable for those working in private practice, aged care and the community.

These are available through the [Dietitian Life website](#), with 3 package options available to suit your needs and budget.



OTHER RESOURCES

Further free resources which may be helpful to refer to as you start your dietetic career include:

- How to get a job as a dietitian
- [How to Work as a Contractor](#)
- How to be successful in a job interview
- How to stay safe in appointments

If working in private practice is your passion, also check out and register your interest for our 2-day intensive [Private Practice Course](#).

FINAL WORD

Congratulations again for starting your Dietitian career! We hope these tips and information help you put your best foot forward and achieve success as a dietitian.

If this at all helped you, we would love for you to share with your friends and to DM us on Instagram and let us know.

Don't forget, Dietitian Life now offer free membership to their new professional development and support platform built specifically for dietitians like you. You have nothing to lose, check it out and sign up by clicking the button below!

[**SIGN UP**](#)

