

Providing culturally responsive dietetic services: a short organisational assessment tool

Background

The Australian 2011 Census reported that over one fifth (20.5%) of Queensland's total resident population was born overseas. The Queensland government has a whole-of-government commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for all Queenslanders. The *Queensland Cultural Diversity Policy (2013)* states that the Queensland Government is committed to delivering frontline services that are the best culturally responsive services in Australia.

To achieve organisational cultural competency, Metro South Health has developed the *Equitable and accessible care framework – multicultural version*. This framework identifies five key domains that need to be addressed to achieve organisational cultural competency.

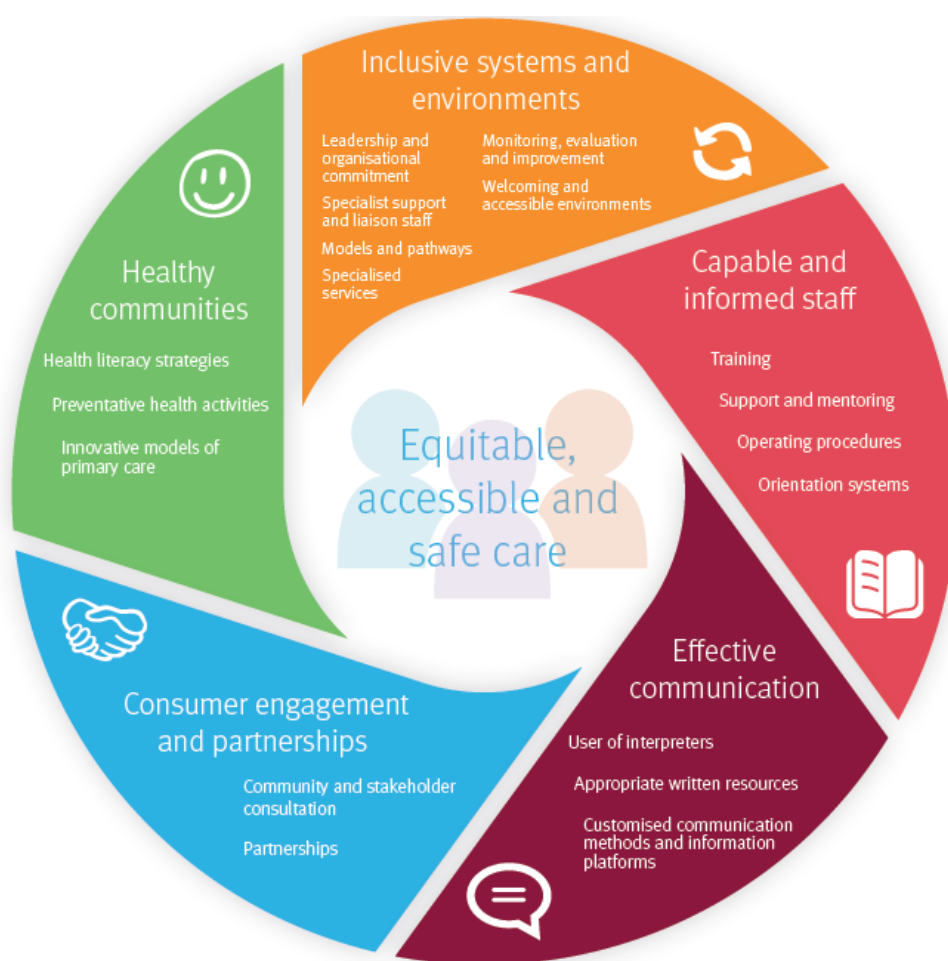


Figure 1. Equitable and accessible care framework – Multicultural version

To ensure culturally responsive services, dietitians require an understanding of the food and cultural practices of clients from a range of cultural groups, as well as competence in communicating complex messages to achieve health outcomes. When working with clients who don't speak English, dietetic units are required to comply with Queensland Health's [Working with interpreters guidelines](#). The use of children, other family members or friends is not advisable.

Health services must consider the potential legal consequences of adverse outcomes when using unaccredited people to ‘interpret’ if an accredited interpreter is available.

In hospitals, the food provided is a key area where cultural responsiveness is required.

Queensland Department of Health’s [Foodservice & Nutrition Best Practice Guideline](#) states that facility menus should include access to culturally appropriate foods. To ensure compliance, key performance indicators (KPIs) have been published in the *Statewide Foodservices Network Food Service – KPI’s*. KPIs that relate to the provision of culturally appropriate food include:

- 1.1.2a Demographic data of the facility population is obtained on at least a biennial basis
- 1.1.2b The menu and foods available meet the requirements (cultural, religious, age, nutritional status) of the population in the facility. (APD assessment and endorsement required). This is linked to *EQuIP National Standard 12.2* that states; ‘*The organisation ensures that the nutritional needs of customers/patients are met.*’

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) *EQuIP* accreditation standards identify ‘*diverse needs and diverse backgrounds*’ as a criterion under *Service Delivery Standard 11*. The actions required are shown below in Figure 2.

Diverse needs and diverse backgrounds	
The organisation meets the needs of consumers / patients and carers with diverse needs and from diverse backgrounds.	
This criterion will be achieved by:	Actions required:
11.6 Establishing the needs of the community in order to meet legislative requirements, inform the delivery of services and assess whether those needs are met.	11.6.1 The organisation obtains demographic data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the diverse needs and diverse backgrounds of consumers / patients and carers • monitor and improve access to appropriate services • improve cultural competence, awareness and safety.
11.7 Ensuring that diverse populations are provided with care and services that meet their needs.	11.7.1 Policies and procedures that consider cultural and spiritual needs are implemented to ensure that care, services and food are provided in a manner that is appropriate to consumers / patients with diverse needs and from diverse backgrounds. 11.7.2 Mechanisms are implemented to improve the delivery of care to diverse populations through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated partnerships with local and national organisations • providing staff with opportunities for training.

Figure 2. Service Delivery Standard 11 (*EQuIP National Standards Book (2012)*)

How this tool can help

The purpose of this organisational cultural competence assessment tool is to guide dietetic units to provide culturally appropriate services to clients from a range of cultural backgrounds. It can also be used to demonstrate compliance to a number of criteria for hospital accreditation. For this reason, links to relevant standards are included in the tool.

This tool provides practical examples of attitudes, values and practices that promote cultural and linguistic competence relating to food and nutrition at the work unit level. It may also help identify gaps and areas within your unit that might benefit from improvement. It is recommended that key actions identified should be incorporated into your work unit’s business and quality improvement plans, and that the tool be used annually to assess progress in this area.

Providing culturally responsive dietetic services: a short organisational assessment tool

Inclusive systems and environments	
Yes/no	Key indicators
	My work unit uses culturally appropriate methods of identifying clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds e.g. when booking an outpatient, information on the client's country of birth, preferred language for oral and written communication, and ethnicity and religion are collected in order for clinicians to be adequately prepared for appointments. <i>(EQuIP Standard Action 11.6.1)</i>
	My work unit has booking processes that include inviting family and/or community members (especially the main food preparer) to attended outpatient appointments with clients when this is culturally appropriate. <i>(EQuIP Standard Action 11.7.1)</i>
	My work unit uses local demographic data and risk profile data on different cultural groups to inform service planning activities e.g. the sourcing or development of translated education tools. <i>(EQuIP Standard Action 11.6.1)</i>
	My work unit promotes a welcoming environment by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> displaying or advocating for the display of pictures, posters and other materials that reflect cultural diversity in outpatient settings <input type="checkbox"/> ensuring that brochures, posters and magazines in client waiting areas are not offensive to clients of different cultural backgrounds.
	Client satisfaction surveys and other quality improvement and research activities within my work unit include clients from different cultural backgrounds assisted by interpreters when required e.g. hospital food service client satisfaction surveys. <i>(National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards Standard 2; Consumer partnership in service planning Criterion)</i>
	The hospital menu is reviewed at least biennially to ensure that foods available meet the cultural and religious requirements of consumers. This includes a review of demographic data of the catchment area to check that catering for all major cultural groups and religions is achieved. <i>(EQuIP Standard 12 criterion; Management of nutrition; Statewide Foodservices Network Food Service – KPI's – Standard 1.1.2)</i>
	My work unit acknowledges the benefit of recruiting staff from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds and utilises their knowledge once employed.

Capable and informed staff	
Yes/no	Key indicator
	My work unit ensures that all staff attend cultural competence training as part of their orientation. <i>(EQuIP Standard Action 11.7.2)</i>
	My work unit takes steps to meet the needs of staff for ongoing cultural training (e.g. food and cultural information on new culturally and linguistically diverse communities). <i>(EQuIP Standard Action 11.7.2)</i>
	My work unit encourages staff to assess their own cultural responsiveness. <i>(EQuIP Standard Action 11.7.2)</i>

Effective communication	
Yes/no	Key indicator
	My work unit implements Queensland Health's Working with Interpreters Guidelines to identify when interpreters should be engaged and to work effectively with interpreters.
	My work unit implements a procedure that outlines the appropriate steps when an interpreter is required but not available e.g. use of telephone interpreting services. It makes

Effective communication	
	its staff aware that the use of children, other family members or friends is not advisable and that there are potential legal consequences of adverse outcomes when using unaccredited people to 'interpret' if an accredited interpreter is available.
	My work unit monitors its use of interpreter services.
	My work unit has a library/database of culturally appropriate education resources for clients (<i>National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards: Action 1.18.3: 'Mechanisms are in place to align the information provided to patients with their capacity to understand'.</i>)
	My work unit develops and implements culturally appropriate models of service delivery, including communication strategies. For example, my work unit engages consumers and/or carers to provide feedback on patient information publications and incorporates this feedback into publications prepared by the health service. (<i>National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards: Actions: '2.4.1 Consumers and/or carers provide feedback on patient information publications prepared by the health service organisation (for distribution to patients) 2.4.2 Action is taken to incorporate consumer and/or carers' feedback into publications prepared by the health service organisation for distribution to patients'</i>)
	My work unit invests in the purchase of food and nutrition resources (e.g. posters, education materials) that welcome clients from a range of cultural backgrounds and resources to assist staff to provide culturally appropriate dietetic advice. (<i>EQuIP Standard Action 11.7.1</i>)

Consumer engagement and partnerships	
Yes/no	Key indicator
	My work unit actively seeks formal and informal partnerships with culturally diverse community groups and services in order to improve its services. (<i>EQuIP Standard 11.7.2</i>)
	My work unit engages people from a range of communities with different cultural backgrounds to inform the provision of culturally appropriate services and to provide feedback on current services. (<i>National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards Standard 2; 'Consumer partnership in service planning' Criterion</i>)

Healthy communities	
Yes/no/not applicable	Key indicator
	My work unit implements promotional activities to increase awareness and access to our services targeting culturally and linguistically diverse communities of higher health risk or low rates of accessing dietetic services. (<i>EQuIP Standard 11.9; 'Collecting health surveillance data and taking appropriate action.'</i>)
	My work unit provides health information (e.g. web information, publications, events, forums) for the wider community that is customised for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. (<i>EQuIP Standard 11.8; 'Delivering health promotion programs, interventions and information based upon current and emerging priority areas and jurisdictional priorities, which are built on collaborative partnerships.'</i>)

Date:	Total score = /20
--------------	------------------------------

Providing culturally responsive dietetic services – Service Plan

Step 1. Using the assessment tool, determine the key areas where improvements are required.

Step 2. Order them by priority. Starting with high priority strategies that are easy to implement will build support in your work unit and assist in building confidence in working in this priority area.

Step 3. Enlist support for any strategies that you may find difficult to achieve on your own. Staff of the Access & Capacity-building Team are happy to provide services for Metro South Health units such as:

- assistance in developing your plan
- help in collecting key demographic and hospital service data, including interpreter use
- general training in cultural competence and customised training for your unit's specific needs
- assistance in developing translated and low literacy client resources.

Step 4. Finalise your plan and set a date to review its implementation.

Step 5. Review your plan and continue using this tool to identify new ways to improve the cultural responsiveness of your services.

Some suggested strategies

- Use food service student placements to assist in quality improvement projects on:
 - consumer satisfaction with meals specifically targeting patients of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Make sure you book interpreters as required
 - development and implementation of cultural training for diet assistants so they can provide appropriate nutritional support for patients of different cultural backgrounds and faiths.
- A project that aims to make multicultural client resources more accessible for staff (hint: start with high priority cultural groups e.g. Pacific Islanders and refugees or those with large populations in your catchment area. See [How to choose culturally appropriate education resources: a guide for dietitians and nutritionists](#)).
- Training for dietetic staff on:
 - interpreter services – onsite and telephone
 - general cultural competence
 - traditional diets of emerging cultural groups e.g. Syrian refugees.
- Encourage staff to explore their individual cultural responsiveness using [Providing culturally responsive dietetic services: a self assessment tool for clinicians](#)
- The development of low literacy or translated culturally tailored resources for common diets for larger culturally and linguistically diverse local communities where no appropriate resources currently exist.

For more information

More food and cultural resources can be found at the Access & Capacity-building Team's web pages at <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural-nutrition-resources>.

Information on other Metro South Health priority groups (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people who are experiencing homelessness, people with a disability and people who are from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds), go to Metro South Health's Health Equity and Access Unit's web pages at <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity-and-access>.

Metro South Health services can also contact the manager of the Access & Capacity-building Team by emailing access&capacity@health.qld.gov.au to access specific advice and assistance.