

Employment of Ontario and Saskatchewan graduates (2014-9) with First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) governance or health facilities.

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Introduction: Current integrated competencies for dietetic education and practice (2013) encompass foundational knowledge of cultural competence, however, graduates may not be specifically prepared for work with Indigenous peoples.

Objectives: Using a broader survey of dietetic graduates from Ontario (ON) and Saskatchewan (SK) (2014-9), we aimed to describe initial employment, specific to FNIM governance or health facilities, and relevant perceptions of preparation.

Methods: A pre-tested survey was mounted on SurveyMonkey® from June-September 2019 and completed by 314 graduates from ON (n=261) and SK (n=53).

Results: The employer for their first primary position as a dietitian, was identified as FNIM governance or health facility by n=22 (10% of question respondents; 64% from SK; 1 who identified as Indigenous). This was the top employer category for first primary dietetic positions in SK. Position locations were in ON (6), SK (11), Alberta (2), Quebec (1) and other (1); 2 in remote/northern locations. Fourteen jobs were full-time (6 being full-time permanent), exceeding relative employment security across all first positions. Principal roles were in community health (n=14), family health teams (n=7) or home care (n=1). By the time of surveillance, 3 graduates remained working for FNIM sector employers and 4 held current positions with provincial governments. While most respondents had high satisfaction with their education and training and felt prepared for their employment, some gaps arose. Feedback included, "Content on First Nations would have been helpful" and "I would like every student to have an entire placement where they focus on Indigenous Health."

Conclusions: The FNIM governance and health facilities sector employs many recent graduates, especially in SK. Additionally, these jobs are relatively secure. Nevertheless, some recent graduates, most Caucasian, expressed desire for more Indigenous cultural education.

Significance: Dietetic education/training needs to explicitly address Indigenous cultural competence to better prepare graduate for contemporary work opportunities.

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