

**Dietitians Improving Education and
Training Standards (DIETS)**

**Report 3: Using Information Technology to Share
Experiences and Enhance Communication Skills
2006-2009**

Edited by Anne de Looy

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and a special thank you to Dr Ian Liddell

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ISBN No: 978-1-84102-242-0

Title: Dietitians Improving Education and Training Standards (DIETS)
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Date of Publication: September 2009

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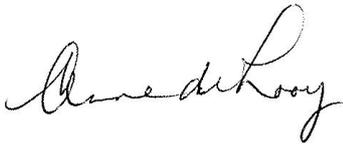
Summary

This report follows the unique exchange of information across Europe that took place through visits conducted as part the EU-funded Thematic Network 'Dietitians Implementing Education and Training Standards' in Europe (DIETS).

A great deal of learning and change to practice was anecdotally reported from the face-to-face visits. These will take time to implement following focussed reflection. This report attempts to capture some of these reflections. Reflection across great distances was an environmental and resource challenge. The meetings were therefore conducted 'virtually' using information technology available to the Partners. This had the added advantage of improving further the ITC skills of the Partners. Finally, students were encouraged to undertake joint meetings or seminars and these are also reported.

Using ITC successfully, and building the confidence of Partners, has increased the capabilities of the Network of HEIs and their dietetic practice placement colleagues. These improvements will endure long after the DIETS Network has finished its work.

The ultimate benefit to the dietitians, through education, lifelong learning and their contribution to nutritional health in Europe will continue to unfold.



DIETS Network Coordinator

September 2009

Background

“Erasmus networks are designed to promote European co-operation and innovation in specific thematic areas of particular importance to higher education in a European context. In this way, they contribute to enhancing quality, defining and developing a European dimension within a given academic discipline, study area, or furthering innovation and good practice on other aspects of higher education development. This is achieved by means of co-operation within the network between higher education institutions, university faculties and departments. Co-operation should also involve academic and other associations, learned societies, enterprises, and professional bodies, other partners of socio-economic importance in the public or private sector and, where appropriate, student organisations. All networks should bring together an appropriate range of relevant stakeholders concerned. Co-operation within networks is expected to lead to outcomes which will have a lasting and widespread impact on higher education institutions across Europe in the field concerned”.

Dietitians provide advice on nutrition, healthy catering and can initiate or contribute to public health nutrition strategies. They work professionally within complex frameworks of accountability, ethical and legal boundaries in a health service, private practice, industry, local government, education or research. They are uniquely equipped to support initiatives such as *the European Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*. In 2004 the International Confederation of Dietetic Associations (ICDA) <http://www.internationaldietetics.org> defined a dietitian in this way:

- A dietitian is a person with a qualification in Nutrition & Dietetics recognized by national authority(s). The dietitian applies the science of nutrition to the feeding and education of groups of people and individuals in health and disease.
- The scope of dietetic practice is such that dietitians may work in a variety of settings and have a variety of work functions.

EFAD¹ represents 25,000 dietitians in 22 European countries, and in 2002 it carried out a mapping exercise that showed curriculum content to be highly variable across Europe. In 2005, after extensive consultation EFAD published a European Dietetic Benchmark Statement (EDBS): ‘European Academic and Practitioner Standards for Dietetics’. This statement began to dismantle the barriers to meeting the goals of the Bologna and the Lisbon Strategies. Dietetic education in Europe crucially varies in the quality and amount of practice education (from a few weeks to one year), yet the effectiveness of any dietetic practitioner requires a high level of practical competence. Learning through practice, or experiential learning, is also a vital component of lifelong learning. A strong academic-practice axis provides higher education institutions (HEIs) with insights into a competency-based curriculum essential to meet the demands of effective work practices of the dietitian and the development of learning from practice (Kolb, 1984). DIETS focusses on harmonisation of the curriculum, practice competence and tools to ensure quality and effectiveness of practice education.

¹ European Federation of the Association of Dietitians

During the period 2006-2009 DIETS was funded to achieve the following aims within the 30 countries and between the 120 Partners who are members of the Network:

- To aid the Bologna and Lisbon processes through mapping and describing all areas of dietetic practice education and training throughout Europe
- To improve communications between educators and dietetic practitioners, to harmonise education and develop quality indicators. In particular, to develop courses in practice education and to publicise best practice through the development of a dedicated website and associated databases.
- To facilitate sharing of knowledge and disseminated research findings amongst educators and practitioners about practice education competences and where possible work with other interested parties throughout Europe and internationally
- To develop the role of the dietitian in promotion of nutritional health through embedding lifelong learning competences in first cycle degrees.

This report concerns the information and learning that was achieved through the development of a European exchange and sharing/networking scheme amongst the DIETS Partners. It records the learning achieved and the information shared between the *academic teachers* in HEIs and the *practice placement teachers* (or supervising dietitians) where student dietitians are placed for their practical training. This period of practical training varies from one country to another and in content and form. The physical (face-to-face) exchange of academic teachers and practice placement educators in the sharing/networking scheme allowed those taking part in the visits to learn about best practice and to share their experiences with the rest of the DIETS Network and other stakeholders. Above all, the reports of those visits support the constant improvement of the practical placement and education of dietitians.

All of the information contained here is available as raw data from the DIETS website. The numbers given in the Tables and other figures refers to Partner numbers of the visitors and enables the reader to cross-refer to the raw data or to contact the Partner directly for more information.

1.0 Introduction

Face-to-face visits took place between 45 Partners over the 3 years of the Network and produced exchange of information and learning about different techniques and skills use to teach students. The aim of these visits was to produce the following results:

- changes to curricula and curricula delivery
- changes to teaching methods
- development of shared and/or new material

An additional focus of the DIETS Network was to encourage the use of new ITC. The large area of Europe meant that the sharing of information and development of practice took place largely through new uses of information technology. Methods other than the traditional questionnaire were used to gather the rich data available following the face-to-face visits in order to encourage the use of ITC amongst the Partners. These virtual visits or meetings used information technology available on the DIETS Website (DIETS, 2009a) and were largely reflective in nature to allow true and deep exploration of the learning that had taken place (Schon, 1983).

2.0 Methods

During 2008-2009, a series of meetings took place between educators, practitioners and students across Europe using information technology. The purpose of these meetings was:

- To review, reflect, share and disseminate best practice for improving the teaching of dietetics in practice
- To complete the collection of data for describing all areas of dietetic practice, education and training throughout Europe
- To promote evidence-based practice through shared understanding
- To improve communication skills using technology between educators, students and dietetic practitioners

In 2009, Partners were also invited to engage with technology to run student sessions across Europe.

2.1 Reflection & review of face-to-face visits, lessons learned & changes to practice

Two methods were used to collect information and encourage reflection about the value of the visits as an agent of change: a traditional written questionnaire and a 'meeting' using technology with a series of guided questions to help review the visit.

Firstly, after the first series of face-to-face visits during 2006/2007, a follow-up questionnaire was sent by mail to the visitors (see Appendix A). (Outcomes of the actual face-to-face visits can be found in DIETS Report 2 (DIETS, 2009b). The following questions were asked:

- What did the HEIs learn from participating in a visit and did they make changes because of the visit?
- Were they interested in making contact with the visit Partner to exchange information and what method of communication they would they be prepared to use?
- On reflection how could the organisation of visits be improved to make the outcomes more valuable?

Secondly, about one year after the face-to-face visit, all visitors were invited by email to take part in a virtual meeting hosted by another Partner HEI. Many of these visits used simple communication technology such as 'Skype' or 'GoToMeeting VOIP'. Skype and GoToMeeting both require participants to use a headset (headphones and microphone). Participants can discuss topics with each other comfortably in meetings of up to eight people. Each person uses their own computer in their own location and the only requirement is a high-speed internet connection. Skype technology is open access and free of charge whereas the software for GoToMeeting is available under license and must be hosted on a server and accessed by nominated individuals. The advantage of Skype is that in small meetings it is possible use a webcam to show synchronous pictures. With GoToMeeting, members of the meeting can view a common screen on their computers, which can then be used interactively. Each participant in the meeting can have 'control' of the common screen to make changes to the document or other format of visual material. In this way, GoToMeeting is highly interactive. The DIETS website provides guidance for using both forms of technology. Appendix C shows the guidance that was given to the Partners for participating in a virtual meeting.

2.2 Virtual meetings or seminars between HEIs & their students

Additionally guidance was developed to enable HEIs to share virtual meetings or seminars with each other and was intended to include students. All HEIs in Partnership with the DIETS Network were invited to take part in this initiative and the guidance developed is shown in Appendix D

All questionnaires were piloted for their clarity and face value before being used. Further feedback from the sample was used to change or modify the questionnaires or the instruction given to the visitors and hosts.

3.0 Results of the Three Initiatives

Table 1 shows the Partners who either completed the follow-up questionnaire or undertook a virtual meeting, and the methods of communication they chose to contact each other.

Table 1: HEIs who participated in the review and the preferred or used method of communication (NA = not applicable)

Country Code	Participating Higher Education Institution	Methods of Communication	
		Identified in the Questionnaire (2006-07)	Method Actually Used for the Virtual Meetings (2008-09)
BE	University College St Lieven, Ghent, Belgium	Phone, Email, MSN, Videoconference	NA
BE	University College Kempen, Belgium		Skype, GoToMeeting
BE	Haute Ecole Leonardo de Vinci, Brussels, Belgium		GoToMeeting
CZ	University Teaching Hospital, Prague		NA
DE	Charite University, Berlin, Germany		NA
GR	Harakopio University, Athens, Greece	Email	NA
GR	Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece	Phone, Email, Skype	Skype, GoToMeeting
GR	TEI of Crete, Greece		GoToMeeting
HU	University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary	Phone, Email, MSN, Skype	Go-To- Meeting
HU	Semmelweis University College, Budapest, Hungary	Email, Skype	NA
IE	Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland	Phone, Email, Skype (home)	Telephone, Skype, GoToMeeting
IT	University of Sienna, Italy	Email, Videoconference (in short time)	NA
IT	University of Rome, Italy		GoToMeeting
NL	Han University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands	Phone, Email	NA
NL	Amsterdam School of Nutrition and Dietetics, The Netherlands	Email	NA
PT	Polytechnic Institute of Braganza, Portugal		GoToMeeting
PT	Higher School of Health Technology, Lisbon, Portugal		GoToMeeting
SE	University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden	Email	NA
SE	Umea University, Umea, Sweden	Email	NA
SE	University of Gothenburg, Sweden		Telephone
SI	University College Primorska and Maribor, Slovenia	Phone, Email	GoToMeeting
TR	Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey	Phone, Email, Skype	Go-To- Meeting
UK	University of Plymouth, Plymouth, England		Skype

The diversity of communication methods is of interest. Further, the use of sophisticated interactive technologies such as GoToMeeting demonstrate the ability of Partners to adopt new approaches

and opt for their use in 2008 and 2009 instead of the more traditionally and readily available email and telephone previously identified in the questionnaire responses from the 2006-2007 visitors.

3.1 Review of the face-to-face visits (results of follow-up questionnaire and virtual visits)

The reflections and review of the value of the visits are presented below grouped together regardless of whether they were achieved by the questionnaire or the 'virtual' meeting. 13 visitors completed the follow-up questionnaires. The result of the questionnaire where it relates to the use of ITC or reflection is included below. The results relating to organisation of the face-to-face visit is included in DIETS Report 2 (DIETS, 2009b). Three different HEIs hosted the 'virtual' reflective visits using available technology.

Visitors in 2006/2007: 2 virtual visits planned between 4 Partners 4 different countries; 1 visit succeeded, the second was a discussion between 1 visit Partner and hosting Partner because the connection failed.

Visitors in 2007/2008: 5 virtual visits planned between 10 Partners from 10 different countries: 3 visits succeeded, 2 visits went on with 1 visit Partner and hosting Partner because the connection failed.

Overall, 10 different HEIs participated in a virtual visit. This represents 14 HEIs who intended to undertake this form of visit (Dublin participated twice; for 3 partners the connection failed and the visit did not take place). Overall, virtual visits and feedback on the visits was obtained from 23 Partners or 50% of the visitors from 9 countries. Table 2 shows the HEIs participating in the 'virtual' meetings or visits.

Table 2: HEIs participating in reflective 'virtual' visits

Year	Partners Participating in Virtual Visits	Hosting Partner	Available on the Website	
			Recording / Record	Notes
2008	Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland. Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece	Kempen University College, Geel Belgium		X
2008	Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey University of Pécs, Hungary (<i>connection failed</i>)	University College Kempen, Geel Belgium		No notes: Turkey gave information to Hungary, did not learn from them
2009	University of Rome, Italy Higher School of Health Technology, Lisbon, Portugal (<i>connection failed</i>)	Haute Ecole Leonardo de Vinci, Brussels, Belgium	X	
2009	University of Pécs, Hungary Kempen University College, Geel, Belgium	Polytechnic Institute of Braganza – Portugal	X	X
2009	TEI of Crete, Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, Greece University of Primorska, College of Health Care Izola, Slovenia	Polytechnic Institute of Braganza – Portugal		X
2009	Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland Gothenburg University, Sweden	Did not use a host		X
2009	Harakopio Univesity, Greece University of Kuopio, Finland (<i>connection failed</i>)	Polytechnic Institute of Braganza – Portugal		X

In the majority of cases, a host organised the meetings and was able to guide the questions and discussion. The host also organised the notes from the meetings and these are available on the DIETS website.

From the notes of the meetings and the responses to the questionnaires it is possible to identify what was learnt and remembered at least a year after the actual face-to-face visit. Table 3 shows

the reflections on improvements that could be made to practice placement visits and Table 4 what the participants in the meetings actually identified as best practice. Table 5 the actual changes made to the curricula or methods of delivery. A recurrent theme that HEIs underlined was that implementation takes time. Implementation often means curriculum changes which can takes some years. Another finding was that implementation is often not possible because some issues depend on changes of national legislation.

Table 3: Reflection on what improvements are needed for practice placement learning as a result of the visits (2007-08)

Source of Data	What can DIETS do to improve education in your country?	Who learned from whom?
Follow-up Q	We need a lot of trainee places more and we need to have trainee places with dietitians (for internal placements) that are educated for supervisor and trained every few years	HAN University, Amsterdam from University College Jutland, Denmark
Follow-up Q	I would like to have courses on master level well described in a database. So it will be possible for student to have the exchange that the Bologna process was planned for. I would like to have this courses in 7,5 ECTS blocks or 15 ECTS.	Uppsala, Sweden from Maribor and Primorska Universities, Slovenia
Follow-up Q	DIETS manager can ask the HEIs to arrange a workshop on the issue and send a report the results to the manager afterwards. One of the administrative persons may come to attend the workshop to facilitate and motivate the activities.	Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey from University of Pécs, Hungary
Follow-up Q	To encourage and organize a visit of our team to another institute having a well structured clinical placement. To suggest more appropriate student's evaluation tools	Harokopio, Athens, Greece from University Teaching Hospital Prague
Follow-up Q	Connections with other countries where they teach dietetics programmes and their expertise can of course be very useful and many ideas can be implemented in dietetics programmes in different countries. Of course mobility between students can also bring values to the dietetics programmes. In Slovenia we proposed two bilateral connections with Sweden and we would certainly like to collaborate within the Erasmus programme. Because mobility of professors and students can benefit the quality of the dietetics or nutrition programmes.	Maribor, Slovenia from Uppsala and Umea Universities Sweden
Follow-up Q	Give enough support like developing standards for education (in special practice education); support exchange programs; give a forum to discuss different issues. I think the most important is to create a forum where dietitians from Europe can meet each other.	Sint Lieven, Belgium from University of Navarra, Spain
Follow-up Q	Disseminate the theoretical and practical education guidelines. It would be very important for us. Networking; exchange of students; comparable ECTS in European HEIs	Semmelweis University, Hungary from Complutense University of Madrid, Spain
Follow-up Q	The education of dietitians in Ireland is currently very good but the course needs to be modularized and semesterised and it is useful to assess how this has worked in Europe. Assessment of students before, during and after practice placements remains problematic and it is useful to be collaborating with European colleagues in this regard. It is useful to discuss how problem-based learning can be integrated to a greater extent into the current course. Working in collaboration with European colleagues should increase the profile of both the profession and how the profession is educated in Europe and nationally.	Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland, from Thessaloniki TEI, Greece

Follow-up Q	a) improve practical training of the students b) improve communication with Universities and Dietetic Associations from other countries c) improve syllabus of undergraduate and postgraduate courses on Dietetics in Greece d) improve dietetic practice in hospitals and continuous education	TEI Thessaloniki, Greece from Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Follow-up Q	Show different ways of education and examination forms	Umea University, Sweden from Maribor and Primorska University of Slovenia
Follow-up Q	The aims of the visits, for me, are two : 1) to standardize the core curriculum in dietetics of European countries in such a way as to be possible the mobility of dietists through Europe 2) naturally this standardisation should occur improving education	University of Sienna from Charité University of Berlin
Virtual visit 2008	Help for assignation of ECTS points to own course Reflection on way of teaching Reinforced moves to increase teaching and assessment of competencies Extensive clinical teaching on wards before their practice placement	Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland from Thessaloniki Technological Educational Institution, Greece
Virtual visit 2008	Public health nutrition course parallel to the dietetic course Good assessment methods	Thessaloniki Technological Educational Institution, Greece from Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Virtual visit 2009	Awareness and confidence that they are doing well Important of changing views with other HEIs and countries to form a strong front against other professionals who want to take over our profession	University of Rome, Italy from Higher School of Health Technology, Lisbon, Portugal
Virtual visit 2009	The importance to students do practice placement learning (PPL) in the same period that they have classes, to discuss with teacher their skill and experiences; The PPL in different Dietetic Area (PPL in Hospitals); all PPL in the same city are easier to organize	University College Kempen, Belgium from University of Pecs, Faculty of Health Sciences, Hungary
Virtual visit 2009	The Competence Based Education System, throughout the Competence List Form	University of Pecs, Faculty of Health Sciences, Hungary from University College Kempen, Belgium
Virtual visit 2009	The Importance to student have PPL in different Dietetics areas	TEI of Crete, Department of Nutrition & Dietetics from University of Primorska, College of Health Care Izola

Table 4: Elements that visitors would like to implement in their training programme

Source of data	What would they implement?	Who learned from whom?
Follow-up Q	Ideas to improve the examination of the clinical part of the education	Umea University Sweden from Maribor and Primorska Universities, Slovenia
Virtual visit 2008	Practice placements : formalise relationships between university and hospitals	Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland from Thessaloniki Technological Educational Institution, Greece
Virtual visit 2008	Pay more attention to assessing competency skills during placement Involve practice placement trainers more in final assessment of student	Thessaloniki Technological Educational Institution, Greece from Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Virtual visit 2009	Use The Integrated Extended Assessment of knowledge at end of the courses units and PPL; Introduce 1week of PPL in the same period of classes.	University College Kempen, Belgium from University of Pecs, Faculty of Health Sciences, Hungary
Virtual visit 2009	Possibilities of students do have different practices places in different Dietetics areas	TEI of Crete, Department of Nutrition & Dietetics from University of Primorska, College of Health Care Izola

Table 5: Changes made or implemented because of the visit

Source of data	What did they implement?	Who learned from whom?
Follow-up Q	Organisation of diet cookery school where students can prepare different types of dishes suitable for different pathological or physiological conditions	University of Sienna from Charité University Berlin
Virtual visit 2009	Improve the way of assess the students in PPL throughout use of evaluation form during practice placement UCK-Belgium for self-evaluation of competences in digital portfolio and web forms	University Pécs Hungary from University College Kempen
Virtual visit 2009	Initiate an Erasmus Exchange programme between visitors	University of Gothenburg and Dublin Institute of Technology
Virtual visit 2009	Multidisciplinary seminars have been included in Consolidation Term that follows practice placement.	Dublin Institute of Technology and University of Gothenburg

3.2 Results from Virtual Student Visits

24 students from 4 HEIs contacted each other virtually to discuss some topics. The student visits were as follows:

Between Higher School of Health Technology, Lisbon and University of Plymouth (2008)

Six students from Lisbon and 10 students from Plymouth prepared a seminar topic on feeding patients with cancer of the head and neck. They then spent the next 90 minutes giving feedback to each other on the techniques that would be employed in both countries and the evidence base for using the feeding methods and products recommended. The meeting was conducted using Skype, small cameras and microphones.

Between Kempen University College, Geel Belgium and Haute Ecole Leonardo de Vinci, Brussels, Belgium (2009)

The HEIs use 2 different languages and have 2 different educational systems. Five Dutch-speaking students from Geel discussed in English with 3 French-speaking students in Brussels. Students had to prepare an answer on discussion points about obesity. (See *Appendix E* and the recorded visit on the DIETS website.) Both students were enthusiastic and found this a very interesting experience. They were interested to join other student visits in the future.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Using information technology to host virtual meetings.

Overall, 23 previous visitors reviewed and reflected on the learning that had resulted from their face-to-face visit. This represents half of all visitors over the three years of the project. To enable reflection to occur, a structured set of questions was devised and Partners responded either by questionnaire or using technology. It is interesting to note that only 5 of the visitors that answered the questionnaire then went on to make a virtual review meeting. Of those 5, only one identified the type of technology that would be used. This reflects the wide adoption of newer technologies that had not been known to the Partners before the DIETS project. However, it also revealed another interesting point. Table 1 also shows that few visitors use technology like Skype and videoconference. Many HEIs were not able to use methods like Skype or MSN as their computer systems did not permit external downloads. Software such as GoToMeeting was made available from the DIETS website as host.

This also demonstrates that new technologies can be successfully introduced and used in a project focussed on improving ITC skills. It was disappointing that only 5 of the Partners who undertook a face-to-face visit in 2006-07 went on to share further information using IT. Seven HEIs intended to undertake further communication but found it hard to devote the time to a virtual meeting. Indeed, one essential learning point is how difficult it is to arrange these meetings and how important it is to have 'hosts' nominated to set-up meetings and to take notes.

All the virtual meetings were undertaken in English, which was the language used in the face-to-face visits. Visitors were reserved in responding, because they were not familiar with the methods of ITC that were used for the virtual visits. They also found it difficult to carry on a conversation in English for a long time when it was not their native language.

Learning points:

- 'Virtual' meetings should be organised using simple communication methods that are available for almost everybody. The variety of methods available must be communicated in a clear and simple way.
- Introduction of simple ITC that does not require software to be downloaded onto individual computers is more universally acceptable
- The organisation of virtual meetings requires perseverance, should be well structured, is best facilitated by a third party or 'host' and an allowance needs to be made for the time for participants to communicate with each other
- It is important to have a pre-defined set of questions to stimulate discussion and to guide the meeting.
- An arrangement for a virtual meeting means that organisation time must be provided.
- Participants in synchronous discussion across European countries need to have a shared language, but even this can prove to be a problem, as participants may not necessarily have the same level of language skills, so limiting the richness of the conversation.

4.2 The learning that has taken place because of the face-to-face visits; reflections a year on

The virtual visits or meetings represent a reflection moment for both of the face-to-face visitors, after 1 year, because during this time the HEI could analyse what was learned and if the best practices could be implemented. Tables 3 and 4 present information about the significant learning points. Over 17 individual items were identified as learnt and ready for change. These can be categorised into:

- assessment and evaluation
- making better use of practice placement learning opportunities
- competence-based education
- relationships between HEIs and placements and between health professionals

The most reported learning overall concerned the methodologies used, like introducing seminars in PPL or web self-evaluation of competences.

There were not a great number of changes identified. This reflects self-confidence as dietetic educators across Europe acknowledge and understand that there are more similarities than differences in their approaches. This is a reassuring message. The feedback also identified that dietetic practitioners, practice placement teachers and students were all being included in feedback from the face-to-face visits.

Table 4 in particular has significant learning points regarding placements that are reflected in the report on face-to-face visits (DIETS, 2009b). Meetings identified the importance of formalising relationships between placements and the HEI. This was reflected in the identified changes that occurred between successive years of visits where HEIs were seen to be implementing more joint assessment of students. Improving assessment of students on placement, especially regarding competence, will be significantly facilitated through the adoption of European Dietetic Competence and their performance indicators (EFAD, 2009).

Table 5 reveals that the introduction of evaluation and assessment tools in placement was implemented as a result of sharing information at the time of the face-to-face visit. A particular innovation identified is the introduction of multidisciplinary seminars enhancing the student (and dietitian) knowledge of an important aspect of dietetic work.

Lastly, using visits (whether virtual or real) was important for sharing best practice and improving abilities. For example, an Erasmus program implementation was revealed as a method to sustain the learning between HEIs

Learning points:

- Forcing a reflection either through a questionnaire or a virtual meeting has succeeded in revealing identified learning and areas of change.
- Visitors undertaking face-to-face visits reported to dietetic colleagues and their students.
- The areas most mentioned for change were assessment practices followed by greater partnerships between the HEI and their practice placements.
- Implementing change will take a considerable period due to HEI quality control procedures or national legislation.
- Both face-to-face and virtual meetings confirmed to visitors that dietetic education in Europe has more similarities than differences and both communication and dissemination reinforce this view.

4.3 Virtual meetings or seminars between students and HEIs

Arrangements for virtual visits for students are even more difficult because 5 different elements have to come together: 2 student groups with supervisor, 2 technical support services and 1 person who hosts the visit).

Learning Points:

A first virtual visit between students can be organised between 2 countries that share the same language or two HEIs within one country. When this visit runs well, 'ice will be broken' and it will be easier to organise virtual visits between HEIs from different countries with different languages.

5.0 Conclusions

The dietitians and students taking part in these technology-assisted reflective and learning sessions shared much information and confidently used their ITC skills. They learned that there is a diversity of means by which information can be shared and that using technology for communication purposes can be both informative and above all a mechanism for developing relationships, which are so important for sustaining a social network that can and will endure.

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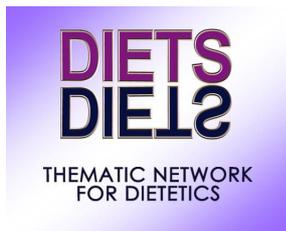
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Appendix A

Visits 2007: Questions Asked in the Follow-up Questionnaire

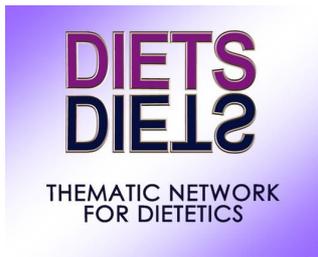


1. What is/are the most important thing(s) you learned from participating in the visit last year?	
2. Did you make any changes to your teaching programme as a result of the visit?	Yes/No
If yes, please describe:	
3. Did you receive enough information about the purpose and organization of the visit before the visit started?	Yes/No
If no, please describe:	
4. Did you feel that you could contact the EPG before, during or after the visits in case of questions/problems?	Yes/No
If no, please describe	
5. Do you have any suggestions for the EPG group for the organisation of future visits?	Yes/No
If yes please describe:	
6. Please give your opinion about what DIETS can do to improve education in your country:	
7. Have you made contact with your visit partner?	Yes/No
If yes, how many contacts?	

8. What method of communication did you use (email, letter, telephone, MSN, Skype, Videoconference)?	
a. What information did you exchange?	
b. Did you implement anything as a result?	Yes/No
If yes, what did you implement?	
If no, would you be prepared to make contact with your visit partner to exchange information about the effects (or not) of the visit?	Yes/No
If yes, please give contact details for each method of communication you would be prepared to use:	
• telephone	Yes/No
• MSN	Yes/No
• Skype	Yes/No
• video-conference	Yes/No
• email	Yes/No
• Other way :	Yes/No
9. Would you be prepared to invite an observer from the Education Practice Group to participate in the meeting?	Yes/No
If no, please explain why:	

Appendix B

Invitation to Take Part in a Virtual Visit



Follow-up DIETS visit 2007

Dear Colleagues,

In the beginning of this year we contacted you and asked you to fill in a little questionnaire about the follow-up of your visit in 2007. In the questionnaire you returned some of you mentioned plans to make some changes within your teaching programmes as a result of the exchange of information from the visit. Most of you were also prepared to make a second 'virtual contact' with the visit partner to exchange information about the effects (or not) of the visit. You mentioned the methods of communication you were prepared to use for this virtual meeting. Suitable methods for this kind of meeting are Skype or msn or videoconference. However, we have identified some problems that are likely to occur:

- the methods of communication were not always suitable or encouraged a real conversation on the virtual visit (eg telephone, email)
- the methods of communication suggested did not always corresponded with these the visit partner
- Installation of this methods or download of specific programs may not be allowed by the HEI.

Because we think these visits are really important we would like to continue these virtual meetings and so we looked for a simple new method without the need of installation or downloading. The method we are therefore choosing is 'GoToMeeting VOIP'. It is simple to use and for this method you just need an email address and a microphone. Before a scheduled meeting, instructions are sent by email.

We would like to know when you could join your visit partner of 2007 by a virtual meeting. We estimate the visit will take about 30 minutes of your time. We would like you to prepare for the meeting with 'points of discussion' that you will find attached. We would like to make appointments for this virtual visit. Can you send to Karin Van Ael, karinvanael@telenet.be ?

- Dates and exact time that you would be able to meet between the last week of November and the end of January?
- Email address where we can contact you for the meeting (if different of email from your answer)

If you have any questions please contact Karin Van Ael. Thank you very much.

Kind regards, The EPG-team

Appendix C

The Proforma and Questions Asked During the Virtual Visits



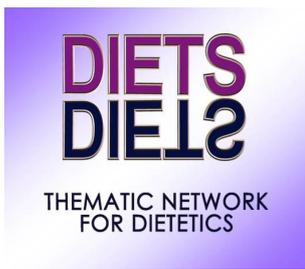
Virtual Visit

Proforma



1. Was the actual visit helpful, useful and informative?
2. Did the visit improve the quality of the way you train your students?
3. How do you know this?
4. How can/did you measure it?
5. How could you/did you involve or inform practice placement trainers (ppt) about the outcomes of the visit?
6. Are you prepared to present a poster at the DIETS conference about the improvement in quality of student training which resulted from the visit?
7. Are you prepared to speak (for about 10 minutes) to a conference workshop about the improvement in quality of student training and/or preparation for practice training which resulted from the visit?
8. Would you be prepared to meet virtually with colleagues from a centre that you have not yet had contact with?
9. Are you able, willing or interested in organising virtual visits between students?
10. Are your students interested in what DIETS is doing (do they know about it)?
11. Anything else?

DIETS Virtual Visit Record



Participants

Code	Partner
050	Dublin Institute of Technology – Ireland <i>Dr Clare Corish</i>
072	Gothenburg University – Sweden <i>Ms Åsa Sunnesson</i> <i>and</i> <i>Ms Henriette Philipson</i>

Points discussed during the virtual visit

1. Was the visit helpful, useful and informative?

Both Partners agreed that the visit was very helpful, useful and informative. It facilitated dialogue and understanding about the academic and practical training of Dietitians in the two countries. As a result of the visit, the University of Gothenburg initiated an Erasmus Exchange programme between the University and the Dublin Institute of Technology. One Swedish student undertook Semester II of Year 3 in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and the University of Dublin, Trinity College (TCD). The Irish programme is currently a conjoint programme of both DIT and TCD.

2. Did the visit improve the quality of the way you train your students? If yes, can you describe the improvement?

Changes have not been yet made to the Swedish programme as the time frame for changes has been too short. In Dublin, additional multidisciplinary seminars have been included in Consolidation Term which follows practice placement. These are held in one academic teaching hospital and are facilitated by a Consultant Endocrinologist. This change was already planned but was reinforced by the success of multidisciplinary teaching practices in Gothenburg, though Gothenburg can currently facilitate these in a very practical format which cannot be done in the Ireland. In the University of Gothenburg, the support to practice placement educators is successfully facilitated through one person (Åsa Sunnesson). In Ireland, the academic staff have to date taken on this role. In Ireland, we have now been sanctioned to advertise for a Practice Placement Coordinator (Senior Dietitian status) who will take on the provision of support for practice placement educators.

How can/did you measure the improvement?

Improvements cannot yet be measured. However, there is general support from students for greater inclusion of multi-disciplinary seminars in the Consolidation Term, provided that they perceive them as relevant to nutrition and dietetic practice. There is support from both HEI academic staff and practice placement educators for a practice Placement Coordinator.

3.

a) Did you involve or inform practice placement trainers about the outcomes of the visit?

Yes, both institutions informed practice placement trainers on the outcome of the visit.

b) How did you do that ?

In Sweden, an article on the visit was written for the Swedish Dietetic Association newsletter. In Ireland, the practice placement educator who accompanied Dr Clare Corish on the visit reported back to the practice placement coordinators group and to the Council of INDI. An article was written on the DIETS project which included one section on the visit to the University of Gothenburg. This was published in the INDI newsletter and posted on the INDI website. In addition, the visit led to discussions in both institutions among the academic staff, particularly the dietetics professional staff.

A further article was written in the 7th DIETS Newsletter based on the experiences of the Year 3 student who undertook the exchange between the University of Gothenburg and the Dublin Institute of Technology under the Erasmus Exchange Programme.

4. Would you be prepared to meet virtually with colleagues from a centre that you have not yet had contact with?

Both Partners agreed that it is difficult to meet virtually with colleagues whom have never been previously met. Once there has been at least one face-to-face meeting, this difficulty reduces significantly.

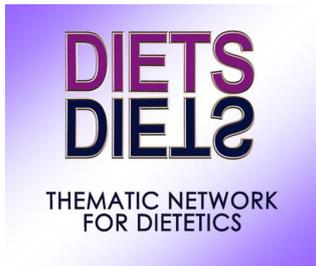
5. Are you able, willing or interested in organising virtual meetings between students?

In principal, yes, both institutions are agreeable provided that such meeting(s) can be scheduled within the timetable and equipment to facilitate such meetings is readily available. In the University of Gothenburg, there is a specific room dedicated and available for such meetings. Although such facilities exist within DIT, they are not within the Faculty of Science and, therefore, difficult to access for Dublin students. In addition, in the Dublin academic timetable, the scheduling of classes leaves little room for extra-curricular activities.

6. Do your students know what DIETS is?

Both Partners agreed that their students are aware of DIETS but that the relevance and implications of the project are not very clear to students who are mainly motivated by assessments and examinations that need to be successfully completed during their programmes. It was agreed that although students are interested in the project in a general sense, their focus lies in the successful completion of their college programme. Working to establish a greater number of student exchanges will improve students' knowledge about the DIETS project.

DIETS Virtual Visit Record



Participants

Ref.	Code	Partners
Visiting year 2 Partners	115	<i>Technological Educational Institution of Crete, Department of Nutrition & Dietetics – Greece</i> <i>Anastasia Markaki</i>
	074	University of Primorska, College of Health Care Izola – Slovenia Tamara Poklar
Virtual visit hosting partner	125	Polytechnic Institute of Braganza, Health Higher School – Portugal <i>Juliana Almeida de Souza</i> and <i>Vera Ferro Lebres</i>

Points discussed during the virtual visit

1. Was the visit helpful, useful and informative?

TEI of Crete

There department was very new. It was not so useful for us. PPL 6 different areas and that was different from what we do and we must considerer it. Now we will considerer how to manage something like that.

University of Primorska

Yes, because we just as started this nutrition program and improve practice placements

2. Did the visit improve the quality of the way you train your students?
If yes,

TEI of Crete

I try to contact by phone all the professional (all over Greece) and involve students in all dietetic activities. But it takes a lot of work. It is something we try now. Next week I will give a proposal to

our department about how we will improve our department. If it is approved we will work on it the next 3 years.

3. a) Did you involve or inform practice placement trainers about the outcomes of the visit?
b) How did you do that ?

University of Primorska

We have meeting with all collaborators. We talked about diets and my past year experience in Greece.

TEI of Crete

As I said before is very difficult to involve all trainers, because they are all over Greece. We hope that with this program we will start in October it will be a good opportunity to talk to them. They are more than 50 people all over. It takes money and time, but it is on our plans. We have a closer communication with Xx ppl. I would like to mention that all diets experience is very useful. We are a new department as well (since 2000) PPPL since 2004. But whatever we like to change we have to send to ministry and after that we have to wait for legislation. All the discuss in diets is difficult for us to place it in practice. For example train the trainers it would be very interesting, but is expensive and we need a government job as well. I think we need more 4 or 5 years to meet the point we would like (course for trainers, hej educators and a common evaluation system). Tamara has a total different ppl... we will try to make a progress... the problem is that we have to wait for legislation. DIETS help us, first with ideas, then with orientation to our national association that can also pressure the government.

4. Would you be prepared to meet virtually with colleagues from a centre that you have not yet had contact with?

TEI of Crete

What means be prepared? ((would you like? Can you contact?)) yes. It is very informative. New ideas. Very useful for our course and our students. Now I see it works...

University of Primorska

We are planning to have virtual visits with students....

TEI of Crete

We do not have that experience. My equipment is at home. But we are moving to a new building. From Monday on we will start exams and students are not available. But in the new building we will be able to do it.

Maybe I will be the contact Erasmus... I am considering because of the extra job...

I have informed students about diets and virtual visits. I would prefer to have a virtual visits with 3rd year students. They are more informed and more motivated. We suggested them to participate. Is there a limit for the number of students?

University of Primorska

No limit...

5. Are you able, willing or interested in organising virtual meetings between students?

University of Primorska

Yes in 20th June we will have with Ljubljana.

TEI of Crete

I hope... How many students will be involved?

University of Primorska

20 students from 2nd year with 10 students from ljubjana.

I would like to thank diets. With there money we bought all this equipment! Thank you!

6. Do your students know what DIETS is ?
Are they interested in what DIETS is doing ?

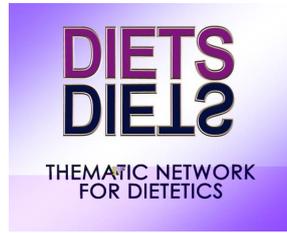
University of Primorska

Yes I have one hour lesson about diets. I explain how they can get password, download docs, etc... But they are 2nd year students and don't have enough time to collaborate, they just go there to get information

TEI of Crete

I am planning to have 1 hour lesson in our new building. In a class. 2 days ago I had send to a ppl information about diets. 5semestre on all students now about it, they also want to go for exchange in another Europe country. All information about diets is on our own site, but students from 1 to 4 semester don't know. The information is mainly used by the older ones. I think is a matter of priorities... soon we will have better conditions and we will be able to do better.

Appendix D Guidance to Partners About a Virtual Visit Including Students



Virtual Meetings for students and staff

Thematic Network

Dietitians Improving Education and Training for Dietetics in Europe

2008 – 09

Briefing paper

Contents

1. Purpose and introduction	page 2
2. Ideas for virtual visits	page 4
3. Technological matters	page 5
4. Finding a partner to 'visit'	page 6
5. Recording and evaluating your experiences	page 7
6. Case studies	page 8
7. Glossary	page 11
8. Guidance to claiming reimbursement of staff costs and equipment costs	page 13

Contacts

Technology: Cito Maramba (inocencio.maramba@plymouth.ac.uk)

Visits organisation: Andrea Räss Hunziker (andrea.raess@bfh.ch)

Educational ideas/content: Anne de Looy (adelooy@plymouth.ac.uk)

Claiming expenses and general questions:

Judith Liddell (network.manager@thematicnetworkdietetics.eu)

1. Purpose

We learn by reading, writing, talking, discussing, sharing and networking. To share our ideas we often need to work together. But Europe is a very big place and for our students and ourselves to meet we will need to often use technology.

This project, which is part of the DIETS Network, is intended to:

- ✓ Encourage networking amongst staff, dietitians and all students of dietetics
- ✓ Experiment with different technologies
- ✓ Evaluate the use of the technologies dietitians and higher education institutions use for communication
- ✓ Develop shared educational resources

Some of the technologies we will want to use may be new to us and therefore when starting this project we would recommend that you:

Work with a small group of students (2-8) and technologists

Getting started:

There are several steps and questions to be asked and to be taken

- a) What technologies are available for you to use (see Section 3)
- b) Which group of students do you want to work with and in what language?
- c) How will you find a partner to work/visit with? (see Section 4)
- d) What will we do on the visit? (Section 2)
- e) How will we record our experiences? (see Section 5)

Have fun!

Andrea, Karin, Willem, Cito, Anne and Judith.....

2. Ideas for Virtual visits

The visit can be:

- on any topic
- at any convenient time
- for any length of time
- between any number of students (technology permitting)
- in any language

Whatever you chose to use or however you decide to do the visit it just needs to be interesting, informative and above all easy to manage!

Try not to invent a new situation if possible

Recommendations:

Use some teaching materials you would have used anyway e.g. a tutorial or a seminar (see Case Study 1& 2)

Use a 'special' lecture to share with another partner

Use two students sharing materials with each other as part of their project work

3. Technological matters

Identify your resources:

Here is a checklist;

Question:	Answer		Follow on:	Outcome
	yes	no		
Do you have video conferencing facilities?			If yes, how many students can be in a group?	Try using video conferencing for your visit
Do you have SKYPE facilities in a classroom? (a computer which can access the WWW)			If yes, can you get sound through wall speakers?	If you have a camera this might be a good option
Do you have a webcam?			If yes can it view one or more people at a time?	You could use SKYPE
Do you have a microphone?				
Do you have facilities for a webinar? (see Case Study 2)				
Chat rooms (DIETS site)?				
GoToMeeting?				
Facebook?				

Once you have identified your technology facilities you will need to know:

- ✓ the booking arrangements
- ✓ the time it is best to meet
- ✓ whether your technologist can be available to support you

4. Finding a partner to visit

Visits can take place between students from any DIETS partner Higher Education Institute (HEI), either from different European countries or within the same country.

Visits can take place in any language.

There are three possibilities for finding a partner to visit – you can choose any of these possibilities or all three!

- 1 Check the DIETS web site to see which partner HEIs have volunteered to participate in a visit and the topics and languages they are offering to share
- 2 Send information about the topics and languages you are prepared to share to Judith Liddell for inclusion on the web site and wait for another HEI to contact you
- 3 Approach a university you already know, which is also a partner in DIETS and ask if you can set up a virtual visit between your respective students.

5. Recording and evaluating our experiences

The methods of recording the visits will depend on the technology used to conduct the visit. It could be a video-recording of the entire meeting which would be available for others to view as a podcast through the DIETS web site or a simple text transcript of the content of the meeting. The exact method will be decided between the technical experts who will help you to organise the visit.

To help us to evaluate the visits you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire once the visit has taken place.

This questionnaire will seek to identify:

1. Social aspects of the visit

Contact

Did the visit promote contact between student dietitians and/or lecturers within your own country or in another European country and did it stimulate ongoing contacts?

Reflection

Did the visit motivate participants to self reflect:

on their own and their Partners mental attitudes, behaviour patterns and knowledge (in relation to cultural differences)?

on their perception of their visit Partners?

2. Technical aspects

Use of information technology

Did the visit:

Increase familiarity with the use of at least one method of information technology in communication and teaching?

Stimulate interest in other (new) types of information technology?

Encourage the use of new and different technologies in teaching and working?

Encourage investment in new technology?

Case Study 1

Exchange between: Lisbon and Plymouth University

Student Groups: 2nd year dietetic students in Plymouth (12 students)

3rd year dietetic students in Lisbon (6 students)

Topic: Enteral feeding and nutritional support in cancer patients

Length of time: 90 minutes

Place: classrooms

Technology: SKYPE; web-cam; microphone

Start time 11:00 GMT

How we did it:

Students at Plymouth had a case study to prepare and then discuss within in their normal tutorial group.

The case study was sent to Lisbon and both groups of students got the case study a week before the seminar and were asked to prepare their answers

The group in Plymouth reported their findings to the group in Lisbon (40 minutes)

The group in Lisbon reported their findings to Plymouth (40 minutes)

Outcome: both groups learned from each other and we exchanged references and other materials after the seminar.

The pictures of the student groups and individual students was projected onto the large screen (using the same process as you would do for PowerPoint) and the quality was good.

The discussion/talk was relayed through microphones mounted on the wall and was fairly clear and certainly understood.

Problems;

- a) The SKYPE method worked well but we had had a practice with the teachers talking to each other a week before the actual seminar. The problem was that at 11:00 GMT the SKYPE was busy and the quality was not as good as it was at 17:00 during the practice
- b) the webcams did not have a wide angle and we had to move the webcam between students
- c) The time for students to speak to each other was not long enough but because it was new to everyone it was tiring and would suggest less material and more focussed.
- d) The microphone was not powerful enough to pick up students speaking 1.5 meters away from the microphone and we had to move the microphone between students.

Case Study 2 (a larger group)

A video conferencing seminar/quiz

Exchange between: X and Y University

Student Groups: 2nd or 3rd year dietetics students in X (20 students)
2nd or 3rd year dietetics students in Y (20 students)

Topic: How well do you know your vitamins and minerals?

Length of time: minutes

Place: classrooms

Technology: video conferencing

Start time 11:00 GMT

How we did it:

Students at both Universities watched the Vitamin and Mineral Quiz available on the DIETS Website at the Re-useable Learning Objects folder for about 45 minutes led by one of the lecturers and answered the following questions:

1. what is the vitamin or mineral being described through the pictures
2. what is its mode of action and how did the reduced level of dietary intake cause result in the signs and states of ill health being shown
3. What are the requirements in health for this vitamin or mineral?

Students had a 10 minute break

Students then took it in turns to report back on their findings to the other group for example University X feedback on the first slide and then University Y feedback on the second and so on

A record was kept of the requirements for each vitamin or mineral in each country and this produced an interesting outcome about how these recommendations different between countries

Outcome: both groups learned from each other and we exchanged references and other materials after the seminar/quiz.

The discussion/talk was relayed through videoconferencing facilities.

Problems;

- a) The videoconferencing method worked well but we had had a practice with the teachers talking to each other a week before the actual seminar. The problem was to make sure the cameras could capture the students for the discussion and the PowerPoint presentation.
- b) the videoconferencing facilities could not easily show the whole group and we needed someone to operate the camera so that close-ups of students speaking could be shown
- c) The time for students to speak to each other was not long enough and we suggest that the number of vitamins and minerals chosen from the Website is reduced to perhaps 6 OR students complete the quiz before the Virtual visit and then feed back to each other concentrating on why recommendations for the levels of vitamins and minerals in the diet are different in different countries of Europe.

We also decided to record and then try putting the session onto the DIETS website for others to view the next time

GLOSSARY

Videoconference: (also known as a videoteleconference) is a set of interactive telecommunication technologies which allow two or more locations to interact via two-way video and audio transmissions simultaneously. We use this term to refer to communication using Dedicated Equipment (eg. Tandberg, Polycom) over high-speed networks, using the H.323 Protocol. There are basically two kinds of VTC systems:

1. **Dedicated systems** (manufactured by companies such as [Polycom](#), [Sony](#), [Tandberg](#), [Radvision Ltd.](#), and LifeSize) have all required components packaged into a single piece of equipment, usually a console with a high quality [remote controlled](#) video camera. These cameras can be controlled at a distance to pan left and right, tilt up and down, and zoom. They became known as PTZ cameras. The console contains all electrical interfaces, the control computer, and the software or hardware-based codec. Omnidirectional microphones are connected to the console, as well as a TV monitor with loudspeakers and/or a [video projector](#). There are several types of dedicated VTC devices:
 1. Large group VTC are non-portable, large, more expensive devices used for large rooms and auditoriums.
 2. Small group VTC are non-portable or portable, smaller, less expensive devices used for small meeting rooms.
 3. Individual VTC are usually portable devices, meant for single users, have fixed cameras, microphones and loudspeakers integrated into the console.
2. **Desktop systems** are add-ons (hardware boards, usually) to normal PCs, transforming them into VTC devices. A range of different cameras and microphones can be used with the board, which contains the necessary codec and transmission interfaces. Most of the desktops systems work with the [H.323](#) standard. Videoconferences carried out via dispersed PCs are also known as e-meetings.

Web conferencing is used to conduct live meetings or presentations over the Internet. In a web conference, each participant sits at his or her own computer and is connected to other participants via the internet. This can be either a downloaded application on each of the attendees computers or a web-based application where the attendees will simply enter a URL (website address) to enter the conference.

Webinar: a neologism to describe a specific type of web conference. It is typically one-way, from the speaker to the audience with limited audience interaction, such as in a webcast. A webinar can be collaborative and include polling and question & answer sessions to allow full participation between the audience and the presenter

VoIP: Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), is a general term for a family of transmission technologies for delivery of voice communications over the Internet or other packet-switched networks. Other terms frequently encountered and synonymous with VoIP are IP telephony and Internet telephony, as well as voice over broadband, broadband telephony, and broadband phone, when the network connectivity is available over broadband Internet access. Examples of VoIP software are Skype and Vonage.

Instant messaging (IM) is a form of real-time communication between two or more people based on typed text. The text is conveyed via computers connected over a network such as the Internet. Examples of IM software are: Yahoo! Messenger, MSN Messenger, Jabber, ICQ, AOL Messenger and PaITalk. A lot of IM software also have VoIP and Webcam capabilities.

Webcam: A video camera whose output may be viewed in real time over a network, especially over the Internet. For videoconferencing the webcam should have a minimum resolution of 0.3 megapixels (640 x 480 resolution)

Guidance to Claiming Reimbursement of Staff Costs and equipment costs incurred when participating in “virtual visits”

The Network will refund 75% of the staff costs contributed to the project by both hosts and guests involved in organising and conducting a “virtual visit”. It is anticipated that both host and visitor institute will contribute three staff days in preparing and conducting the “virtual visit”. This money will be reimbursed to the Thematic Network Partner University (up to the maximum permitted as indicated in Appendix B of the application form)

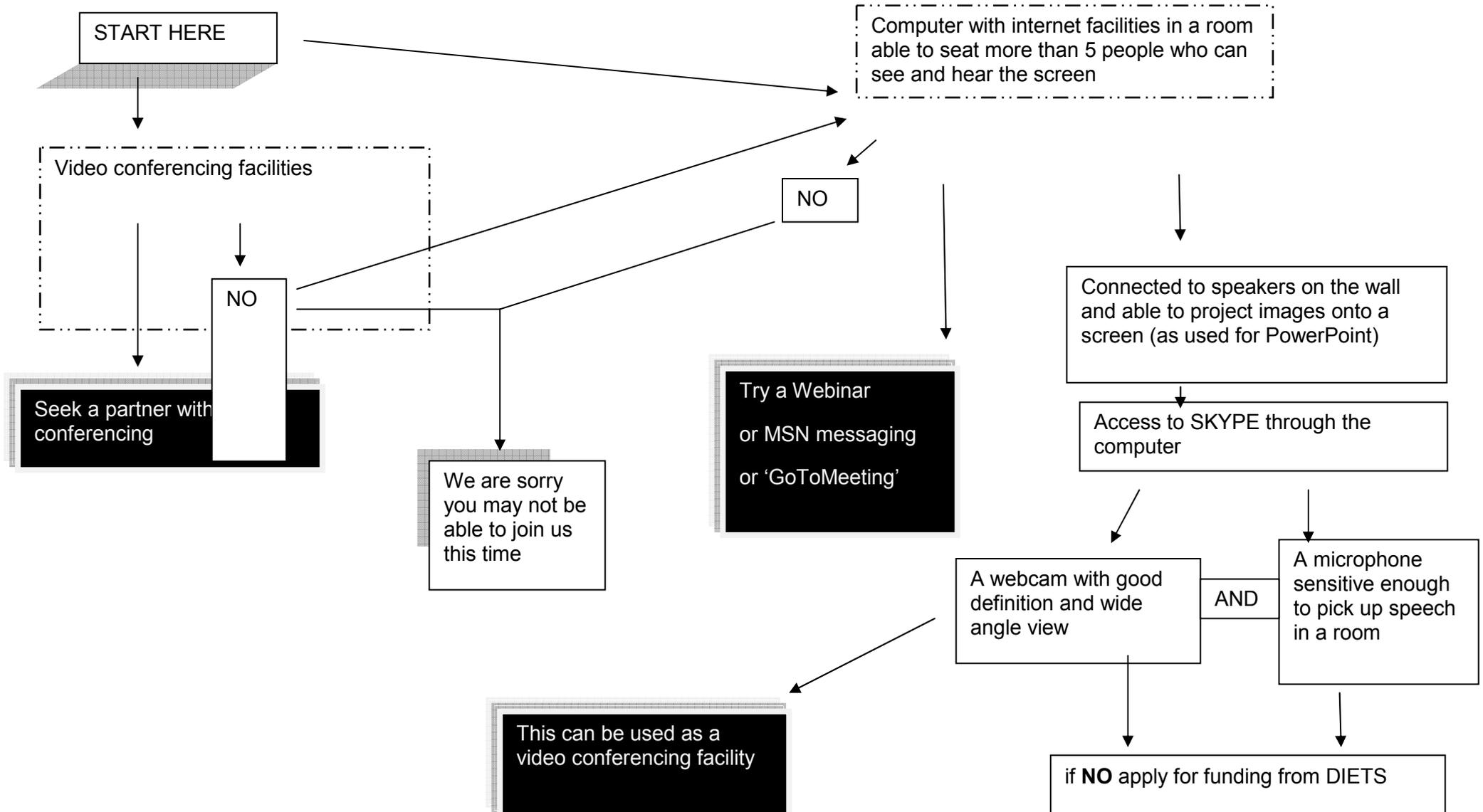
The Network will also refund 75% of the purchase cost of any equipment necessary to enable you to undertake a virtual visit. To be eligible for this refund you must provide three quotes for the price of the equipment and obtain written authorisation from the Thematic Network Manager **BEFORE** you purchase the equipment. To claim the 75% refund you must provide original receipts for the purchase of the equipment.

Application forms for reimbursement of staff costs and reimbursement of equipment costs are available from:

Judith Liddell, the Network Manager

network.manager@thematicnetworkdietetics.eu

Virtual visits: student to student OR staff to staff OR staff to student



Appendix E

Discussion Points Student Meeting

Minse de Bos Kuil, Amsterdam School of Nutrition and Dietetics, The Netherlands

1. Individual has his or her own responsibility for their weight
2. Humans are not well equipped to survive in a Western society of plenty
3. Everybody with overweight or obesity should have access to bariatric surgery
4. Marketing of high-energy food is out of control
5. People with a BMI of >30 should pay more for their health insurance
6. Do you have any suggestions how we can manage this epidemic?