

NACS Competencies for Facility-Based Health Care Providers

The table below reflects the content of the 5-day NACS training course for facility-based providers and the knowledge and skills participants are expected to demonstrate in their workplaces. The table is divided into four columns: topic, type of provider, knowledge and skills. The competencies needed most often in the workplace are listed at the beginning of the table. The later competencies depend on these. For example, to classify a client’s nutritional status, a provider needs the basic competencies of clinical and anthropometric assessment. To develop a nutrition care plan for a client, a provider needs the basic competency of classification of nutritional status.

NACS competencies			
Topic	Provider	Knowledge	Skills
Module 1. Overview of Nutrition			
Importance of nutrition in care and treatment	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of integrating nutrition into health care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the importance of nutrition for good health.
Nutrition definitions	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic nutrition terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define basic nutrition terms.
Causes of malnutrition	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptual framework of malnutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition.
Signs of malnutrition	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs of malnutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the signs of malnutrition in children, adults, pregnant women and people with HIV.
Consequences of malnutrition	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consequences of malnutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe what can happen to someone who is malnourished without nutrition interventions. Describe the consequences of malnutrition for people with HIV.

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Topic	Provider	Knowledge	Skills
Nutritional requirements	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macronutrient and micronutrient requirements of children, adults (including pregnant and post-partum women) and people living with HIV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the energy and protein requirements for different age groups. • Explain the additional energy and nutrient requirements of people living with HIV.
Critical Nutrition Actions (CNA)	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight Critical Nutrition Actions, messages and explanations • Approaches to preventing and managing malnutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the Critical Nutrition Actions and explain the reasons for the messages for each action. • Counsel clients on how to prevent and manage malnutrition.
Nutrition issues for people with TB and HIV	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect of TB on nutritional status • Interaction between TB and HIV • Relationship between nutrition and HIV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the interaction between TB and nutrition. • Explain the interaction between HIV and nutrition. • Explain the importance of nutrition interventions to improve immunity and nutritional status.
Module 2. Nutrition Assessment, Classification and Care Plans			
Clinical assessment	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of malnutrition • Diagnosis of medical complications • Bilateral pitting oedema as a sign of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a client's dietary history. • Check a client for signs of severe wasting. • Check a child's growth curve on the growth chart. • Interpret client biochemical information. • Diagnose and treat a client's medical complications or refer for treatment. • Assess a child or adult for bilateral pitting oedema.

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Topic	Provider	Knowledge	Skills
Anthropometric assessment	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate anthropometric measurement tools for different groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure weight and height accurately. • Measure mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) accurately. • Find body mass index (BMI) using weight and height measurements. • Find weight-for-height (WHZ) using weight and height measurements.
Diet history	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet history methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess a client's food access and intake. • Counsel the client based on the results.
Classification of nutritional status	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUAC cutoffs for SAM, MAM and normal nutritional status for different age groups • BMI cutoffs for different age groups • WHZ cutoffs for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classify a client's nutritional status correctly based on anthropometric measurements.
Managing malnutrition	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algorithm for managing malnutrition in adults • Algorithm for managing malnutrition in children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and follow the appropriate nutrition care plan for a client based on nutritional status. • Refer a client with medical complications for further assessment and management. • Give an appetite test to acutely malnourished clients who qualify for RUTF. • Refer a client to relevant community services and programme for further support.

Module 3. Nutrition Education, Counselling and Referral			
Definition of counselling and required skills	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between advice, education and counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate between advice, education and counselling. • Define counselling as non-judgmental, empathetic communication between a client and a provider to help a client make a choice or solve a problem.
Planning a counselling session	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning a counselling session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for a counselling session by considering time, venue and materials.
Counselling skills	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills needed to counsel effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply effective counselling skills with clients.
Nutrition counselling using the GATHER approach	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GATHER steps in counselling • Checklist of counselling techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the GATHER steps when counselling a client. • Assess counselling using the checklist.
Counselling on the Critical Nutrition Actions	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food groups and a balanced diet • Food and water safety and hygiene • Dietary management of common conditions and HIV-related symptoms • Management of food-drug interactions and drug side-effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsel clients on the importance of a balanced and varied diet and how to plan meals to include all food groups. • Counsel clients on the importance of food and water safety and how to maintain it. • Counsel clients on how to manage common health conditions through diet. • Counsel people with HIV on the dietary management of HIV-related symptoms, food-drug interactions and drug side-effects.
Nutrition education	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition education topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a nutrition education session using relevant materials.

Linking clinic and community services	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channels of community outreach • Community case finding • Importance of linking NACS clients with community services and programmes • Constraints that keep clients from accessing NACS services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community outreach channels and services. • Refer clients to appropriate community services. • Accept clients referred from community services and programmes. • Report client status back to community providers.
Module 4. Nutrition Support			
Importance of nutrition therapy for malnourished clients	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for nutrition therapy for people with acute malnutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the purpose of nutrition therapy and supplementation for clients with acute malnutrition.
Types and purpose of specialised food products to treat acute malnutrition	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised food products to treat acute malnutrition (therapeutic and supplementary foods) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define 'specialised food products'. • Define 'therapeutic foods'. • Define 'ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF)' and 'fortified blended food (FBF)'. • Identify specialised food products used in Tanzania.
Client enrolment and exit criteria for specialised food products	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment and exit criteria for treatment with specialised food products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate anthropometric and medical criteria that qualify clients for specialised food products.
Appetite test	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for appetite tests for acutely malnourished clients • Steps in conducting an appetite test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an appetite test with an acutely malnourished child or adult.
Preparation and tasting of specialised food products	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient content of RUTF and FBF • Instructions for clients to prepare and consume specialised food products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate preparation of FBF. • Explain to clients how to prepare and use RUTF and FBF. • Explain to clients that specialised food products are medicine that should not be shared with other family members.

Management of clients on specialised food products	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate kind and amount of specialised food products based on nutritional status • Client enrolment and exit procedures • Clinical and community referral services and procedures for clients on specialised food products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribe the appropriate kind and amount of specialised food products based on nutritional status. • Manage clients on specialised food products, including counselling and follow-up. • Correctly complete specialised food product registers and forms.
Ordering, receiving, storing and reporting on specialised food products	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for handling NACS commodities • NACS reporting requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimate required types and amounts of specialised food products needed each month. • Order specialised food products. • Complete specialised food product reporting forms accurately. • Submit completed reporting forms according to schedule.

Module 5. NACS Monitoring and Reporting

Purposes of collecting nutrition information on clients	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of regular monitoring of nutritional status • Uses of NACS information for client and facility management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the importance of recording and monitoring nutritional status of clients.
Reporting NACS data	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NACS reporting data required by government and donors • Confidentiality of client information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete required NACS reporting forms accurately. • Submit completed reporting forms according to schedule.
Quality requirements for NACS services	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality requirements for NACS services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the requirements of functional NACS services. • Assess the quality of NACS services in the workplace.

Client follow-up	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of regular follow-up of client nutritional status • Client follow-up methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up clients regularly to monitor their adherence to NACS recommendations.
Site practice visit	Nurses Clinicians Nutritionists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition assessment, counselling and support, including for people living with HIV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate nutrition assessment and counselling, including for people living with HIV. • Describe positive NACS practices observed in the site. • Identify problems in applying nutrition assessment and counselling skills learned in training. • Cite constraints to implementing NACS in the practice site visited.