

Bridging the Gap

Development of Education
Programming to Support Entry into
Alberta's Dietetic Workforce



COLLEGE OF DIETITIANS
OF ALBERTA



Bridging the Gap

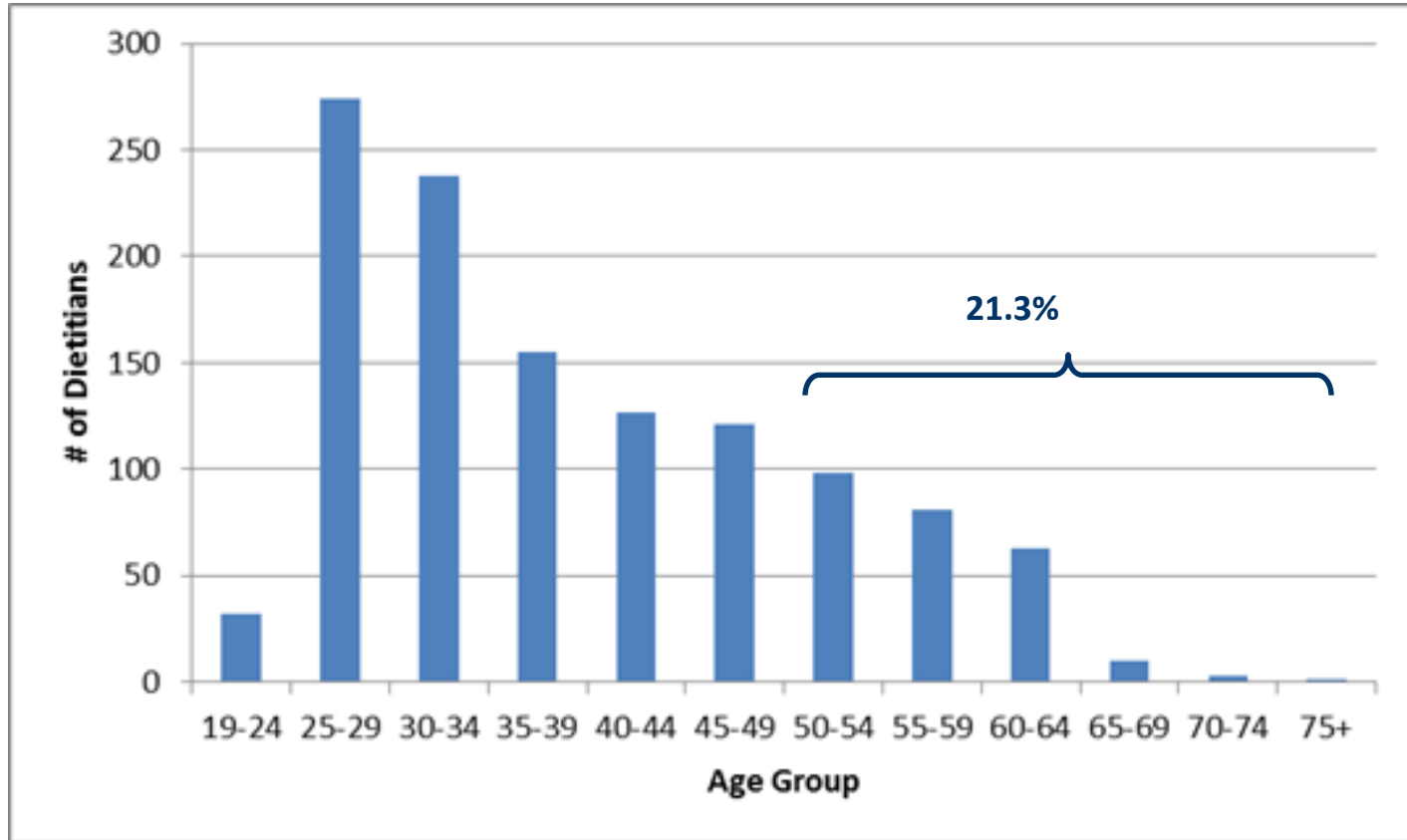
Understanding the importance of Internationally educated dietitians to Alberta.



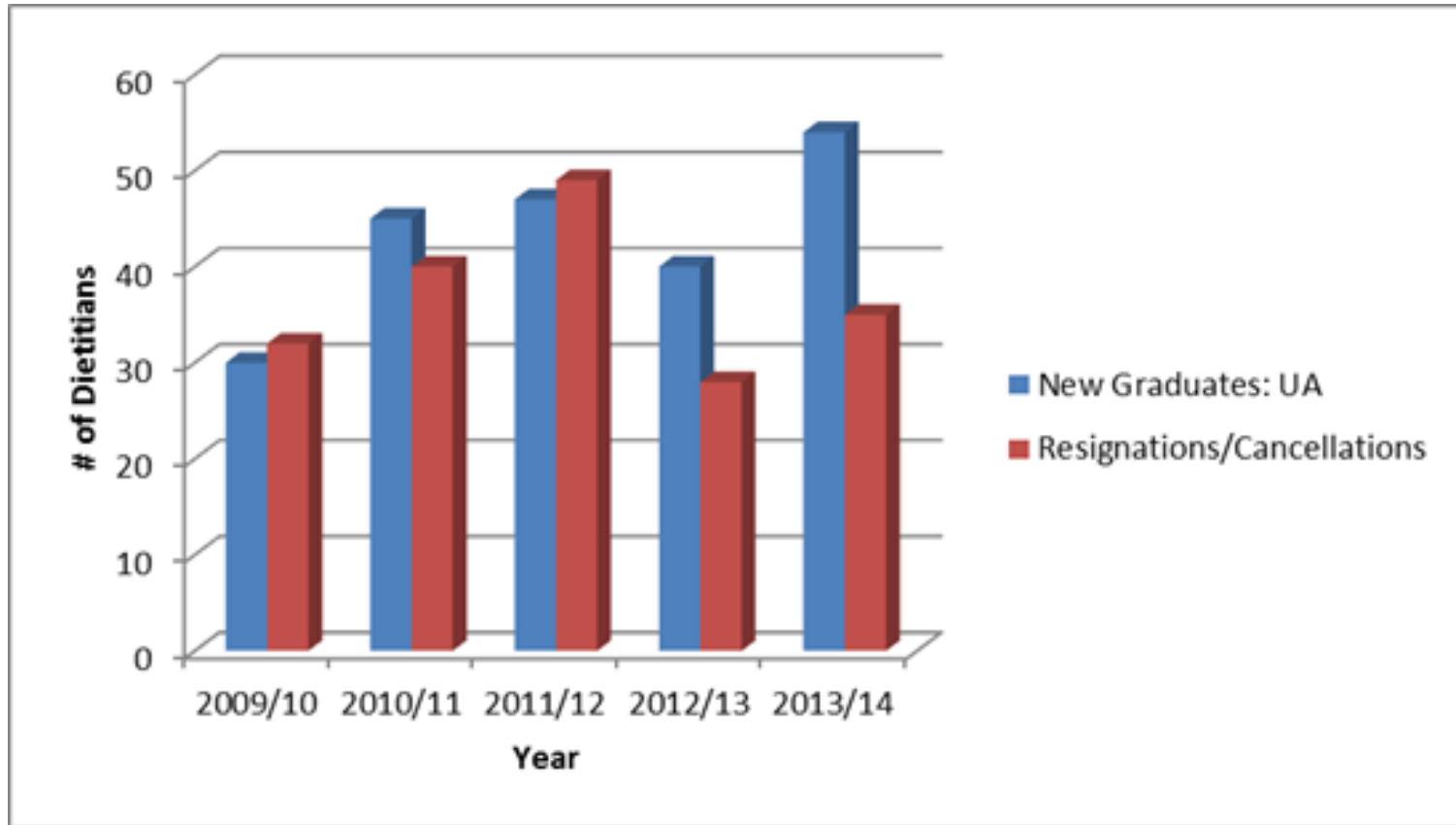
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- Approximately 10% of applicants to the College each year are internationally educated
- The College has received applicants from 27 different countries.



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Rationale for the development of a bridging
Program



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Bridging the Gap

- CDA relies on foreign trained Dietitians
- Existing process was not ideal
- Need for a tailored process
- Need for an accessible program

What is Professional Bridging?

- Bridging supports **qualified** internationally trained individuals to enter the workforce.
- Bridging provides Canadian-specific practice knowledge and workplace experience **without duplicating the basic, discipline specific knowledge the individual is already expected to have learned.**
- Bridging is based on the assumption that the individual already possesses the language skills and foundational knowledge that is universally necessary for safe, effective and ethical practice.
 - Not a replacement for discipline-specific academic course work or study.



Bridging Versus Academic Upgrading

- To be bridgeable, individuals must hold the basic knowledge and skills associated with their discipline or area of practice.
 - Individuals who cannot demonstrate that they hold this basic knowledge are “not bridgeable,” and should be referred for language training and/or academic upgrading **BEFORE** embarking on bridging.
- Strong applicant assessment strategies are needed to separate individuals who will benefit from bridging from those who will not.



Best Practices – Bridging Programs

- Establish minimum language proficiency.
 - Develop strong admission criteria and an evidence-based pre-admission process.
 - Provide an orientation.
 - Address academic voids.
 - Provide gap training (modules)
- Provide practical training and experiential learning opportunities.
 - Create accessible support systems.
 - Provide structured opportunities for feedback.
 - Use flexible delivery methods (e.g. web/distance education).
 - Measure program success on meaningful indicators (e.g. employment in the field).



Alberta Internationally Educated Dietitian Bridging Program

- Canadian practice knowledge and the option to participate in work-place based, experiential learning.
- Four courses (12 weeks each), part time, web-based. Part time basis and consists of a total of four academic courses (12 weeks each) offered in a web-based, modular format.
- The professional practicum* element of the program is tailored to individual learner needs and ranges from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 24 weeks.
 - Occurs in health care facilities across the province.
 - Relocation to centres outside of Calgary and Edmonton is required.



Pre-Admission Assessment

Determines if basic requirements for registration are met, including language.



CDA Document Assessment

Move to Registration

Refer to U of A for Practice Knowledge and Competency Assessment

Refer to Academic Upgrading or Study

Move to Registration

Refer to Bridging Program



Implementation - AIEDBP

- Web-based courses and pre-admission assessment processes have been completed and pilot tested.
- Applications to the program will be accepted in Spring 2015.
- First cohort of learners will begin in September 2015.



Bridging the Gap

Partnerships



Conclusion

- Bridging programs can help to transition qualified individuals into the Canadian work force.
- Strong pre-admission processes play a key role in separating individuals who would benefit from bridging from those who would not.
- Best practices in bridging program design focus on web-based, flexible course work with opportunities for experiential learning, social connectedness and structured feedback.



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