



Nutrition and Dietetics Didactic Program (DPD)

Student Handbook

2025-2026
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School of Human Ecology
Tennessee Tech University

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ACEND published revised Accreditation Standards effective 11.1.2025; revisions are noted in yellow highlight in this revised digital version of the DPD Handbook.

Program Overview

The Food, Nutrition and Dietetics (FND) area of study was first identified as a concentration in the Tennessee Technological University (TN Tech) undergraduate catalog in 1975 as part of the Home Economics major. The name of the school was changed to the School of Human Ecology (SOHE) in 1997. The Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) received initial Accreditation in 1976. The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) has continuously approved the program since that time. Dr. Cathy Cunningham served as DPD Director from 1975-1999, and again from 2002-2007. Dr. Melinda Anderson served as DPD Director from 2007-2014 and was re-appointed DPD Director in August 2015. Dr. Anderson continues to serve as DPD Director. Contact information for Dr. Anderson: 931-372-3378 or manderson@tnstate.edu

In August 2016, the name of the concentration changed to: Nutrition and Dietetics (HDPD).

ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Nutrition and Dietetics Didactic Program (DPD) at Tennessee Tech University is currently granted Accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (Phone: 800-877-1600 ext. 5400) or [ACEND](http://ACEND.org). ACEND is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education as a Title IV gatekeeper. The DPD program completed its seven-year accreditation site visit in September 2021 and has received confirmation of continued accreditation for another seven-year cycle. The next accreditation site visit is scheduled for 2028.

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The Nutrition and Dietetics Didactic Program (DPD) at Tennessee Tech University seeks to provide a high-quality curriculum that prepares students for supervised practice leading to eligibility for the CDR credentialing exam to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Graduates will be qualified and competent to successfully enter supervised practice programs and/or graduate school.
2. Graduates will be prepared to pursue careers in food, nutrition and dietetics that will improve quality of life for individuals, families, and communities.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Program Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Program Completion: At least 80% of program students complete program/degree requirements within 3 years (150% of planned program length).
2. Graduate Application and Acceptance into Supervised Practice: At least 60 percent of program graduates apply for admission to a supervised practice program prior to or within 12 months of graduation.
3. Of program graduates who apply to a supervised practice program, at least 50 percent are admitted within 12 months of graduation.
4. Graduate Performance on Registration Exam: The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.
5. TN Tech DPD graduates will be scored as above average or higher (80%) in preparation for supervised practice by program directors.

Program Goal 2 Objective:

6. 75% of TN Tech DPD graduates responding to an alumni survey will indicate they are engaged in activities/careers that improve quality of life for individuals, families, and communities

Information to Prospective Students and the Public Standard 7

Program policies, procedures, practices, and materials related to student recruitment and admission comply with state and federal laws and regulations. Recruitment and admission practices are applied fairly and consistently. Program outcomes data are available on request. Please send a written request to Dr. Melinda Anderson, DPD Director, at manderson@tnstate.edu or School of Human Ecology, 715 Quadrangle Drive, Cookeville, TN 38505.

Policy and Procedures Standard 8

Required Element 8.1

- a. Student Performance Monitoring: The program's system of monitoring student performance must provide for the early detection of academic difficulty and must take into consideration professional and ethical behaviors and academic integrity of the student.

Student Performance Monitoring, Step One

Student Performance Monitoring is accomplished through several steps. First, the Nutrition and Dietetics program uses a self-managed application process for admission to its undergraduate didactic program (DPD) in Nutrition and Dietetics. It is the student's responsibility to collect and prepare all forms and documents and to submit them at one time to the DPD Director. Fulfillment of specific requirements does not ensure admission into the program. The application process allows for early analysis of a student's GPA and commitment to the DPD Program.

Eligibility:

Students interested in pursuing an ACEND Verification statement from the TN Tech DPD program will be required to complete an application process. Students must have completed ALL of the following requirements in order to be eligible to submit an admission application:

1. Must have completed at least 7 hours in HEC 2020 (Nutrition for Health Sciences), and HEC 2240 (Food Preparation & Management). A grade of "B" or higher is required in HEC 2020 and HEC 2240.
2. Must have completed and received a grade of "C" or higher in: CHEM 1010, 1020 (General Chemistry I & II); and BIOL 2350 (Intro Anatomy & Physiology).
3. Must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the time of admission to the DPD program.
4. Students who wish to transfer to the DPD program in the School of Human Ecology at TN Tech must have their transcripts evaluated by the DPD Director (at least two weeks prior to application deadlines) in order to determine DPD course equivalency. Other university courses will be evaluated for equivalency by the TN Tech Transcript Analyst.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Students will submit application information via email to the DPD Director. The application can be submitted at any time prior to advising week during fall or spring

semesters. Dr. Anderson will email each student who is eligible to apply to upper division to remind them of the process and timeframe for submission. A statement of professional goals should be attached to the application. This should be typed and include: your professional goals and why you have selected nutrition and dietetics as your program of study. This document should be limited to no more than 2 double-spaced pages and be free of grammatical errors.

ADMISSION PROCESS CHECKLIST FOR DPD

- active Tennessee Tech student: number of hours completed:
- completed HEC 2020, 2240 (minimum B in 2020 & 2240); or transfer equivalents as determined by DPD Director
- completed CHEM 1010, 1020; BIOL 2350 (min grade: C); or transfer equivalents
- cumulative** GPA of at least 3.0
- completed application form
- typed professional goals/narrative document

Student Performance Monitoring, Step Two

Student Performance Monitoring continues each semester by evaluating student learning throughout the academic program at predetermined times in courses as established by the syllabi for those courses, as well as advising appointments. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the various evaluation methods so that they are well prepared for each evaluation, each semester.

To increase student success, TN Tech utilizes an early notification system in which advisors are notified by the instructor if one of their students is struggling in a class or at risk to fail a class. This student alert system is found in Tech Connect (the advising portal). The DPD Director is the academic advisor for all DPD students from 30 credits to graduation. The Academic Advisor for all DPD students from zero to 29 credits is assigned within the Launchpad Student Success Center at the Volpe Library. The DPD Director (and Student Success Advisor) schedules regular advising appointments with each DPD student, each semester to advise for next semester courses and to check on overall progress in current classes. Student concerns are directed toward the appropriate university resource for resolution. **Any issues with professional behavior, ethical behaviors, and/or academic integrity are taken very seriously. The TN Tech Plagiarism and Code of Conduct policy will be followed, as well as the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics.**

At the end of each semester, the DPD Director checks final course grades and cumulative GPA of all DPD students. If a student falls below the **required 3.0 GPA** or receives a course grade lower than required for continuation in the program; the

student receives an email reminder of the program retention requirements. Students are advised to meet with the DPD Director in person to discuss options when grades/GPA fall below expectations. If at any time, student coursework or conduct is at an unsatisfactory level of performance or the student's health status is a detriment to the student's successful completion of the DPD program, a meeting will be held with the DPD Director to resolve the concerns and determine a course of action.

Required Element 8.1

- b. Student Remediation and Retention: Concerns about a student's performance in meeting program requirements are addressed promptly and adequately to facilitate student's progression in the program.

DPD Retention Procedures

Students who have been admitted to upper division dietetics must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better EACH semester. A grade of "B" is required for all DPD courses; any grade lower than this will require that course to be retaken and will likely delay time to graduation. A grade of "C" is required for all Science courses; any grade lower than this will require that course to be retaken. Students will be removed from the DPD program when the GPA falls below 3.0 for more than 2 semesters; or students do not retake courses with less than acceptable letter grades. Students may choose to re-apply another semester when grades have improved or courses retaken.

Students will be **retained** in the TN Tech DPD program provided the following retention criteria are met EACH semester:

1. Completion of all required courses as outlined on the 120-hour B.S. Degree Curriculum for Human Ecology: Nutrition and Dietetics Concentration
2. Maintenance of a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 GPA each semester for all courses on transcript; and an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 (minimum) in 3000 and 4000 level DPD courses.
3. Once admitted to upper division, a letter grade of A or B is required in all 3000 and 4000 level DPD courses and a letter grade of C or higher in Science courses each semester.

The DPD Director monitors all DPD student grades at the end of each semester to verify adherence to retention requirements. Any student failing to meet retention requirements will be notified by email within ten days of final grade postings. Students are allowed to retake courses as needed to meet retention criteria.

Any student denied admission or retention to the TTU DPD program will be notified in writing/email by the DPD Director. Students are given the opportunity to discuss the rationale of the decision with the DPD Director. If a student is not satisfied with the explanation, he/she may request a review of the decision by the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology. An official request for review must be received by the

Dean in writing within 10 business days from the mailing date of the denial letter. Requests for review received later than 10 days after receipt of the denial letter will be reviewed at the discretion of the Dean.

Remediation Procedures and Access to Remedial Instruction

Students with minimal chances of success in the program will be counseled into career paths that are appropriate for their ability. In cases where a student has the potential to be successful in the program, a remediation plan will be developed and the DPD Director will work with the student on a timeline for success. If the student does not complete the remediation plan during the agreed upon timeframe, the student will be dismissed from the DPD program.

DPD students are advised each semester by the DPD Director. Students are encouraged to meet with the DPD Director each semester to review academic progress, goals and course selection. DPD Students who fail to meet for academic advising are sent email notifications and phone calls until a face to face or virtual meeting can be scheduled.

Each DPD Course syllabus includes a statement about remediation:

“For any assignment in this course that is used to assess progress toward a KRDN objective, a score of 80% or better must be achieved. If a student does not score at least an 80% on the designated assignment, a remediation assignment or option will be given. However, the instructor reserves the right to use the original score/grade when calculating the overall grade for the course. Students who do not achieve the level of competency required (80% or better), even after remediation, would not be eligible to receive a Verification Statement. Points deducted for late assignments will not be calculated in the grade used for KRDN assessment.”

TN Tech has a vested interest in the success of each student and provides the resources students need to do well academically. Resources include tutoring and learning support services:

Tutoring

Required Element 8.1

c. Supervised Practice Documentation (Not applicable to DPD)

Required Element 8.1 Deleted

d. **Equitable Treatment:** The program must establish policies to support the diverse needs of students, ensure an inclusive environment and to ensure equitable treatment by program faculty, of students from all backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, national origin, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, size socioeconomic status, and age.

Equitable Treatment

The DPD Program follows all university policy related to equitable treatment of students. Tennessee Tech University encourages and supports affirmative action and equal opportunity. The DPD Program at TN Tech is committed to supporting the diverse needs of students, ensuring an inclusive environment and ensuring equitable treatment by program faculty of students from all backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, national origin, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, size socioeconomic status, and age. Please see TN Tech Non-Discrimination Policy for more details: <https://www.tntech.edu/hr/nondiscrim.php>

Required Element 8.2

- a. Insurance requirements, including those for professional liability – Not applicable to DPD
- b. Liability for safety in travel to and from assigned areas- Not applicable to DPD
- c. Injury or illness while in a facility for supervised practice – Not applicable to DPD
- d. Drug testing and criminal background checks, if required by supervised practice facilities – Not applicable to DPD
- e. Requirement that students doing supervised practice must not be used to replace employees- Not applicable to DPD
- f. When students are paid compensation as part of the program, policies must be in place to define compensation practices

DPD students are never paid compensation as part of the DPD Program requirements; therefore, no policies are in place.

- g. The process for filing and handling complaints about the program from students that includes recourse to an administrator other than the program director and prevents retaliation. The program must maintain a record of student complaints for a period of seven years, including the resolution of complaints.

Process for Filing and Handling Complaints

The TN Tech Student Complaint policy is found at:

[Student Complaint Policy](#)

Students who have a grievance with the DPD program are encouraged to meet with the DPD Director to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved, the student may present the grievance to the Director of the School of Human Ecology and/or the Dean of the College without fear of retaliation. A student may initially present his/her grievance to the Director of the School and/or Dean if preferred. Some grievances may be under the

jurisdiction of the College and/or University and university policies for student complaints/grievances will be followed as specified in the Student Handbook. The office of Student Affairs may facilitate the processing of student grievances as appropriate [Student Affairs](#)

Dr. Melinda Anderson (DPD Director, and Director of the School of Human Ecology)
<mailto:manderson@tnstate.edu>

Dr. Darron Smith (Dean of the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology)
<mailto:darronsmith@tnstate.edu>

There will be no retaliation toward any student who has filed a complaint. If a student suspects that retaliation has occurred, the same procedure for filing a complaint may be followed and/or the student may contact the office of Student Affairs directly at [Student Affairs](#)

- h. Process for submission of written complaints to ACEND related to program noncompliance with ACEND accreditation standards after all other options with the program and institution have been exhausted.

If a student has followed the proper procedure, as outlined above, and still believes that the matter has not been properly handled, the student has the right to file a complaint with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Written complaints may be sent to: ACEND, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606. The phone number is: ACEND: 800-877-1600, ext 5400. Website: [ACEND](#)
Email: ACEND@eatright.org

From the ACEND Website: "ACEND has established a process for reviewing complaints against accredited programs in order to fulfill its public responsibility for assuring quality and integrity of the educational programs that it accredits. Any individual, for example, student, faculty, dietetics practitioner and/or member of the public may submit a complaint against any accredited program to ACEND. However, the ACEND Board does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admissions, appointment, promotion or dismissal of faculty or students. It acts only upon a signed allegation that the program may not be in compliance with the Accreditation Standards or Policies. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints are not considered. "

- i. If the program grants credit, experiential learning hours or direct assessment for students' prior learning, it must define procedures for evaluating equivalence of prior education or experience. Otherwise, the program must indicate that it has no policy for assessing prior learning or competence.

ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING

Students with coursework from another institution who wish to have that coursework considered for substitution of TN Tech coursework must submit official transcripts from all institutions attended. In addition, students should be prepared to provide copies of syllabi, assignments and/or exams to provide documentation of course content. The DPD Director will review transcripts and determine course equivalency for HEC DPD courses. If the DPD Director is unable to determine course equivalency from the materials provided, the student will be required to pass a comprehensive examination of the course content in order to justify course equivalency. The TN Tech DPD program does not give academic credit for previous work or volunteer experience toward meeting course completion requirements.

- j. Process for assessment of student learning and regular reports of performance and progress.

Assessment of Student Learning and Progress

Assessment of student learning and progress occurs via course assignments, exams, projects, course grades, and other measures of student ability and learning. Students in the TN Tech DPD program receive verbal and written feedback during each DPD course in order to provide opportunities for improvement as needed. DPD students are required to meet face to face with the DPD Director once per semester for academic advising, to discuss progress toward graduation requirements, and to provide counsel for supervised practice applications.

At the end of each semester, DPD faculty meet to review KRDN completion data for that semester and discuss any individual student who did not reach competency in any KRDN.

As stated earlier in this handbook, the DPD Director checks course grades at the end of each semester for each DPD student. DPD students whose GPA falls below a 3.0 or who have a grade lower than a “B” in any HEC DPD Class, or “C” in any Science class in any given semester will be sent an email notification about their at-risk status. Students are encouraged to meet with the DPD Director in order to develop a plan of correction which may include tutoring and other forms of remediation. If it is determined that a student does not have the ability or GPA to be successful in the DPD Program, guidance will be provided toward a different major or career pathway.

- k. Program retention and remediation procedures; students must have access to remedial instruction such as tutorial support.

Please see pages 8-9 earlier in this Handbook for the program retention and remediation procedures, including tutoring services.

I. Disciplinary/termination procedures

Disciplinary/Termination Procedures

Students falling below the 3.0 cumulative GPA or receiving a grade of “C” or lower in any Science course, or lower than a “B” in any HEC DPD Course in any semester, will be sent an email indicating their GPA or course grade is below the minimum requirement for retention. Students in this circumstance will be placed on probation for one semester. If by the end of the next semester, their GPA is not 3.0 or above (or course grade improved); they will be dismissed from the DPD program and counseled into another program of study. Students may re-apply to the DPD program one time following a dismissal.

m. Graduation and/or program completion requirements for the program including maximum amount of time allowed for completing program requirements applicable at the time student enrolls.

DPD Completion Requirements

Students have completed the TN Tech DPD program when:

1. They have completed the 120-hour BS Degree Curriculum in Human Ecology – Nutrition and Dietetics concentration.
2. Students have maintained a **cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above**, with no grade lower than a B in all HEC DPD required courses, and no grade lower than a C in all required Science courses (See Appendix A for required DPD courses)
3. Students should plan to complete the DPD requirements within 3 years of admission to the DPD program (150%) of the program length.

- n. Verification statement requirements and procedures ensuring that all students completing requirements established by the program receive Verification statements.

Verification Statement Requirements & Procedures

In addition to earning the BS degree, students who satisfactorily complete all DPD program requirements receive an ACEND Verification Statement from the DPD Director signifying the completion of the academic qualifications required by ACEND to be eligible to apply for an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program.

In order to receive a verification statement, students enrolled in the DPD program at TN Tech must:

1. Achieve and maintain a **cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above**, with no grade lower than a B in all HEC DPD required courses, and no grade lower than a C in all required Science Courses. A list of DPD required courses is found in Appendix A.
2. Complete a minimum of 21 hours of upper division food and nutrition courses from TN Tech, to specifically include: HEC 3240 Quantity Food Production, HEC 4271 Medical Nutrition Therapy, and HEC 4272 Clinical Dietetics.

The Verification Statement is a VERY IMPORTANT document and should be kept with the graduate's permanent records. Graduates who need additional copies of the form should contact the DPD Director.

Beginning in May 2021; the Verification Statement was emailed with certified electronic signature according to new guidelines from ACEND. Students can also request hard copies be mailed to them.

Students who have previously earned a bachelor's degree may choose to enroll in the DPD program at TN Tech to receive an ACEND verification statement. These students may be awarded a verification statement from TN Tech if they complete all the DPD required courses (Appendix A) with a grade of B or better in required HEC DPD Courses, a C or better in all required Science courses, and earn a **cumulative GPA of at least 3.0**. Transcripts from previous degrees will be reviewed by the **DPD Director** to determine whether previous coursework satisfies any of the DPD program requirements.

Transfer students (without a BS degree) must complete at least 21 hours of upper division food and nutrition courses at Tennessee Tech University (to specifically include: HEC 3240 Quantity Food Production, HEC 4271 Medical Nutrition Therapy, and HEC 4272 Clinical Dietetics) in order to be eligible to receive the verification statement. Transcripts from universities/colleges will be reviewed by the **DPD Director** to determine whether previous coursework satisfies any of the DPD program requirements; a grade of

C or better is required for coursework to be considered from other universities to apply towards a verification statement.

All coursework meeting upper division (3000 and 4000 level) food and nutrition course requirements must be completed within five years of receiving the verification statement. Students who completed upper division food and nutrition courses five or more years ago will be required to retake all the 3000 and 4000 level food and nutrition courses, in addition to satisfying all the requirements listed above.

- o. Programs using distance instruction and/or online testing must employ strategies to verify the identity of a student.

No distance instruction or online testing is used by the TN Tech DPD Program

- p. Withdrawal and refund of tuition and fees.

The TN Tech policy for withdrawal and refund of tuition and fees can be found at the following link:

[Withdrawal and refund of tuition and fees.](#)

- q. Program schedule, vacations, holidays and leaves of absence.

The TN Tech academic calendar can be found at: [Academic Calendar](#)

The TN Tech DPD program schedule follows the university calendar with classes offered in fall, spring and summer semesters. Holidays are determined by the university. The DPD Director is available to students and individuals interested in applying to the program year-round and is available by email during holiday breaks. In the event the DPD Director were to take a temporary leave of absence, an appropriately qualified member of the Human Ecology faculty would be appointed to cover the duties of the DPD Director during that absence.

- r. Protection of privacy of student information, including information used for identifying students in distance learning.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student information. TN Tech takes the privacy of student information very seriously. The complete policy statement of "Privacy Rights of Students" is available online in the Student Handbook and can be viewed at:

[Student Rights](#)

- s. Student access to their own student file

DPD student files are maintained by the DPD Director and stored in a locked and secured location. Access to the DPD student files is limited to only the DPD Director. Information contained within each student file includes but is not limited to academic advising notes, program of study progress, and Verification statement (following graduation). DPD students may view their files upon request.

- t. Access to student support services, including health services, counseling and tutoring and testing and financial aid resources.

Campus Health Services provides medical care through an outpatient facility staffed by licensed physicians and nurse practitioners. Services include a general medical clinic, allergy and immunizations, preventative care, and referrals as needed. More details are found at: [Health Services](#)

The TN Tech Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness offers services such as personal counseling, academic counseling, career counseling, testing, campus outreach and consultation services free of charge to enrolled students. More information is found at [Counseling Center](#)

The office of Financial Aid website provides information for students related to financial aid:

[Financial Aid](#)

Dean of Students <https://www.tntech.edu/dos/index.php>

DIETETIC STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND ETHICS

Students enrolled in the TN Tech DPD program must follow appropriate student conduct as outlined in the TN Tech Student Handbook:

[Student Handbook](#)

Additionally, dietetic students should conduct themselves in a professional manner while on or off campus while attending classes or completing coursework. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics is the reference document for professional conduct of dietetics students and practitioners

[Nutrition & Dietetics Code of Ethics](#)

Professional Dress Code

Students are expected to be clean, neat, and dressed in a professional manner when representing the TN Tech DPD Program.

FEES AND EXPENSES

Fees and expenses related to tuition and other costs can be found at:

[Fees](#)

ADDITIONAL DPD EXPENSES

Transportation expenses may be incurred as part of the following courses:

HEC 3201 Community Nutrition

HEC 3240 Quantity Food Production

HEC 3270 Nutrition and Disease

HEC 4271 Medical Nutrition Therapy

HEC 4262 Nutrition Applications in the Community

HEC 4272 Clinical Dietetics

HEC 4945 Sports/Human Performance Nutrition

Membership Fees REQUIRED for the program include:

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics - approximately \$60.00 per year

Recommended:

Food, Nutrition and Dietetics Association (TN Tech) - \$10.00 per year

Equipment/lab apparel costs may be incurred in HEC 2240, and/or HEC 3240 approximately \$15 for a lab coat.

PROCESS TO BECOME A REGISTERED DIETITIAN

To become a registered dietitian nutritionist, you will need to:

- Enroll in an ACEND®-accredited Coordinated Program in Dietetics (CP), Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics (GP) or International Coordinated Program (ICP). These programs combine classroom and supervised practical experience, provide a minimum of a graduate degree and are accredited by ACEND. Graduates are then eligible to write CDR's Registration Examination for Dietitians to become credentialed as registered dietitian nutritionists.

Or:

- Enroll in an ACEND-accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics academic program. This program, which is accredited by ACEND, grants at least a bachelor's degree. After you receive your degree, you will then need to apply for and complete supervised practice experience in an ACEND-accredited Dietetic Internship Program and obtain a minimum of a graduate degree. You will then be eligible to write CDR's Registration Examination for Dietitians to become credentialed as a registered dietitian nutritionist.

The full list of steps including post-certification:

To become a [registered dietitian nutritionist](#), you will need to:

1. **Earn a minimum of a graduate degree from an accredited dietetics program.** Classes vary according to program, but in general, coursework covers subjects that may range from food and nutrition sciences, foodservice systems management, business, economics, computer science, culinary arts, sociology and communication to science courses such as biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, anatomy and chemistry. **A master's degree is required to be eligible to sit for the RDN exam.** Some accredited programs include a master's degree, while other students complete their undergraduate in dietetics and earn a master's degree in another field (e.g. public health, communications, etc.).
2. **Complete a supervised practice requirement.** In addition, individuals must complete at least 1,000 hours of supervised practice to gain real-world experience and apply knowledge learned in the classroom to the context of a variety of work settings.
3. **Pass a national exam for RDNs.** Once you complete your degrees and supervised practice, you may schedule to take CDR's Registration Examination for Registered Dietitians to become a credentialed as registered dietetics nutritionist. This is called "RDN eligibility," meaning you have completed the requirements to become eligible to take the national exam.

4. **Meet requirements to practice in your state.** Many states have regulatory laws (i.e. licensure) for food and nutrition practitioners. All states accept the RDN credential for state licensure purposes.
5. **Stay up to date in dietetics through continuing education.** After successfully passing the national exam and earning the credential, RDNs maintain ongoing professional development to stay up to date on the latest research, recommendations and best practices. 75 CEUs are required to be completed every 5 years to maintain the RDN credential.

The Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics administers the examination and also establishes the criteria for eligibility of applicants to take the exam. Eligibility criteria include both knowledge and performance standards. The knowledge requirements are stated at the end of this Handbook and provide the core knowledge base for entry-level dietitians. The performance requirements involve completion of an ACEND accredited post-baccalaureate supervised practice program designed to provide students with practice experience and opportunity to master specific performance skills necessary for entry-level dietitians.

Forty-seven states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia currently have statutory provisions regulating the dietetics profession or associated titles such as dietitian and nutritionist. In Tennessee, registered dietitian/nutritionists are required to apply for an receive licensure from the State of Tennessee's Board of Dietitian/Nutritionist Examiners. Requirements for licensure in each state can be found [here](#).

Effective January 1, 2024, the minimum degree requirement to be approved for eligibility for the registration examination for dietitians changed from a bachelor's degree to a graduate degree. This decision was made by the Commission on Dietetic Registration based on the recommendations of the Council on Future Practice Visioning Report (2012).

Elevating entry-level RD requirements to the graduate degree is consistent with the level of education required to gain the knowledge, skills, and research base required in the field of nutrition and dietetics for entry-level practice and is necessary to protect the public. ACEND® accredited program directors may already be receiving inquiries from students and prospective students regarding this change.

Please refer to [CDR's list](#) of frequently asked questions, policy rationale, student scenarios and important deadlines.

The School of Human Ecology now offers the MS Degree in Community Health and Nutrition which has received accreditation status from ACEND for a Future Education Model (FEM) Experiential Learning track within the MS Degree. Students who

successfully complete the Experiential Learning track and MS Degree requirements are eligible to sit for the RDN exam. More details are found here:

<https://www.tntech.edu/cahe/hec/programs/community-health.php>

APPLICATION TO A SUPERVISED PRACTICE PROGRAM

Supervised practice from an accredited program is required, along with academic coursework to become a registered dietitian/nutritionist (RDN). There is a national application process that is made available through the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS

Online application to supervised practice programs uses the Dietetics Inclusive Centralized Application Services (DICAS). Students can get more information and set up accounts at: [DICAS](#)

TIPS FOR APPLYING TO A SUPERVISED PRACTICE PROGRAM

Beginning Spring 2026, juniors will enroll in HEC 3212 Careers and Professional Preparation in Dietetics in preparation for applying to graduate programs by the October deadline.

1. Build a professional portfolio. Begin EARLY to establish relationships, experiences and an information base needed to successfully apply for supervised practice. Directors of the supervised practice program consider these attributes:
 - a. **Cumulative grade point average – Many programs require a GPA of 3.0 or higher for admission.** Other programs may not specify a certain GPA, but national competition and experience strongly suggests that a GPA of 3.0 or higher is needed for acceptance. Grade points are viewed as **cumulative**. Particular consideration is given to all DPD courses, with special emphasis on science courses and upper division nutrition and food service courses.
 - b. *Relevant work experience.* Evidence that you are a productive, reliable and competent worker is critical. Volunteer and paid work experience in areas of nutrition and foodservice is helpful.
 - c. *Activities.* Program directors look for students whose activities suggest they are committed to becoming a registered dietitian and contributing to the profession.
 - d. *Leadership.* Demonstrated leadership skills. What future expectation do you have for yourself? What evidence can you provide to the selection committee that you are a good investment for their program?

- e. *References.* Dietetic programs often require references in the following categories: DPD Director, professors, academic advisors, employer and personal. Obtaining good references should not be the sole basis for decisions, but it is important to develop relationships over time with people who may serve as references in the future. This may include a variety of interactions so that the persons from whom you request recommendations have an adequate basis for providing a strong reference when needed.
2. Collect information about supervised practice programs: The *Directory of Dietetic Programs* is available on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website [Directory](#)
Information about supervised practice programs should be sought during the sophomore and junior years. Once the directory has been reviewed, a student should select programs of interest, request information on the programs, review the information, and develop a sense of which program(s) best suits his or her needs.
3. Follow good business etiquette in writing, e-mailing, and calling for information and in all professionally related activities. You cannot predict when a program director or potential employer will form an opinion about you. Good business practices suggest that all written communications be on plain, good quality paper, typed, error-free, grammatically correct, well-organized, and the request clearly stated. All correspondence (including e-mails) should be dated, include name and correct titles of person to whom you are writing, and include your complete name and contact information.
4. Applications to supervised practice programs are a national application process. The application timetable is available here [Student Applications](#)
 - a. Each program will have its own application requirements – pay close attention to what is required for submission – each program will have a separate application fee. Make a grid of what is required for each program.
 - b. Applications for graduate school are completed in separate packets according to each school's guidelines – these often require separate recommendation letters and separate mailing addresses.
 - c. Request letters of recommendation from appropriate individuals and allow enough time for completion. One letter of recommendation must come from the DPD Director – Dr. Anderson.
 - d. The DPD Director will complete “Declaration of Intent to Complete Form” online in DICAS when applicant submits Dr. Anderson's contact information.
5. Adhere to Dietetics applicant and Program Traffic Rules – See Appendix E.
6. Take the GRE if needed: [www.gre.org](#)

DECLARATION OF INTENT and DPD Course Form

This form is required as part of the application documents in DICAS. The form is completed online in DICAS by the DPD Director (you must submit Dr. Anderson's contact information) and states the courses to be completed and the date the B.S. degree will be complete. The DPD Course Form is also required of students enrolled in a DPD Program; this form is found on eatrightpro.org. Dr. Anderson will complete this form when requested by each applicant who then submits it in DICAS. Students who have already completed B.S. degree requirements would submit a Verification Statement instead of the Declaration of Intent to complete form.

ACEND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS 2022

Standard 3: Curriculum and Learning Activities

REQUIRED ELEMENTS:

3.1 The program's curriculum must be designed to ensure the breadth and depth of requisite knowledge needed for entry to supervised practice to become a registered dietitian nutritionist.

- a. The program's curriculum must include the following required components, including prerequisites:
 1. Research methodology, interpretation of research literature and integration of research principles into evidence-based practice
 2. Communication and documentation skills sufficient for entry into professional practice
 3. Principles and techniques of effective education, counseling and behavior change theories and techniques
 4. Governance of nutrition and dietetics practice, such as the Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics; and interprofessional relationships in various practice settings
 5. Principles of medical nutrition therapy, the Nutrition Care Process and clinical workflow elements
 6. Role of environment, food, nutrition and lifestyle choices in health promotion and disease prevention
 7. Management theories and business principles required to deliver programs and services
 8. Continuous quality management of food and nutrition services
 9. Fundamentals of public policy, including the legislative and regulatory basis of nutrition and dietetics practice
 10. Licensure and certification in the practice of nutrition and dietetics
 11. Individual National Provider Identifier (NPI)

12. Health care delivery systems (such as accountable care organizations, managed care, medical homes, local health care agencies)
13. Coding and billing of nutrition and dietetics services to obtain reimbursement for services from public or private payers, fee-for-service and value-based payment systems
14. Food science and food systems, food safety and sanitation, environmental sustainability, global nutrition, principles and techniques of food preparation, and development, modification and evaluation of recipes, menus and food products acceptable to diverse populations
15. Organic chemistry, biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, genetics, microbiology, pharmacology, statistics, logic, nutrient metabolism, integrative and functional nutrition and nutrition across the lifespan
16. **Cultural humility, self-reflection, and diversity, equity and inclusion**
16. Reflective practice
17. Human behavior, psychology, sociology or anthropology

b. The programs' curriculum must prepare students with the following core knowledge:

Domain 1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice: Integration of scientific information and translation of research into practice.

Knowledge

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

KRDN 1.1 Demonstrate how to locate, interpret, evaluate and use professional literature to make ethical, evidence-based practice decisions.

KRDN 1.2 Select and use appropriate current information technologies to locate and apply evidence-based guidelines and protocols.

KRDN 1.3 Apply critical thinking skills.

Domain 2. Professional Practice Expectations: Beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the nutrition and dietetics practitioner level of practice.

Knowledge

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

KRDN 2.1 Demonstrate effective and professional oral and written communication and documentation.

KRDN 2.2 Describe the governance of nutrition and dietetics practice, such as the Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics.

KRDN 2.3 Assess the impact of a public policy position on the nutrition and dietetics profession.

KRDN 2.4 Discuss the impact of health care policy and different health care delivery systems on food and nutrition services.

KRDN 2.5 Identify and describe the work of interprofessional teams and the roles of others with

whom the registered dietitian nutritionist collaborates.

KRDN 2.6 Demonstrate cultural humility, awareness of personal biases and an understanding of cultural differences as they contribute to diversity, equity and inclusion.

KRDN 2.7 Describe contributing factors to health inequity in nutrition and dietetics including structural bias, social inequities, health disparities and discrimination.

KRDN 2.8 Participate in a nutrition and dietetics professional organization and explain the significant role of the organization.

KRDN 2.9 Defend a position on issues impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession.

Domain 3. Clinical and Client Services: Development and delivery of information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations.

Knowledge

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

KRDN 3.1 Use the Nutrition Care Process and clinical workflow elements to assess nutritional parameters, diagnose nutrition related problems, determine appropriate nutrition interventions and develop plans to monitor the effectiveness of these interventions.

KRDN 3.2 Develop an educational session or program/educational strategy for a target population.

KRDN 3.3 Demonstrate counseling and education methods to facilitate behavior change and enhance wellness for diverse individuals and groups.

KRDN 3.4 Practice routine health screening assessments, including measuring blood pressure and conducting waived point of care laboratory testing (such as blood glucose or cholesterol)

KRDN 3.5 Describe concepts of nutritional genomics and how they relate to medical nutrition therapy, health and disease.

KRDN 3.6 Develop nutritionally sound meals, menus and meal plans that promote health and disease management and meet client's/patient's needs.

Domain 4. Practice Management and Use of Resources: Strategic application of principles of management and systems in the provision of services to individuals and organizations.

Knowledge

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

KRDN 4.1 Apply management theories to the development of programs or services.

KRDN 4.2 Evaluate a budget/financial management plan and interpret financial data.

KRDN 4.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the regulation system related to billing and coding,

what services are reimbursable by third party payers, and how reimbursement may be obtained.

KRDN 4.4 Apply the principles of human resource management to different situations.

KRDN 4.5 Apply safety and sanitation principles related to food, personnel and consumers.

KRDN 4.6 Explain the processes involved in delivering quality food and nutrition services.

KRDN 4.7 Evaluate data to be used in decision-making for continuous quality improvement.

Domain 5. Leadership and Career Management: Skills, strengths, knowledge and experience relevant to leadership potential and professional growth for the nutrition and dietetics practitioner.

Knowledge

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

KRDN 5.1 Perform self-assessment that includes awareness in terms of learning and leadership styles and **cultural orientation and** develop goals for self-improvement.

KRDN 5.2 Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals.

KRDN 5.3 Practice how to self-advocate for opportunities in a variety of settings (such as asking for needed support, presenting an elevator pitch).

KRDN 5.4 Practice resolving differences or dealing with conflict.

KRDN 5.5 Promote team involvement and recognize the skills of each member.

KRDN 5.6 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance and expectations of a professional in mentoring and precepting others.

3.2 A curriculum map must be developed that:

a. Identifies didactic courses which occur in various settings or practice areas that students will complete to meet the required curriculum components and core knowledge.

b. Sequentially and logically organizes the progression of didactic courses from introductory to more advanced learning activities and builds on previous knowledge or experience to achieve the expected depth and breadth of knowledge by completion of the program.

3.3 The program's curriculum must provide learning activities to attain the breadth and depth of the required curriculum components and core knowledge. Syllabi for courses taught within the academic unit must include the KRDNs that will be assessed in the course or rotation and the learning activities that facilitate achievement of the KRDNs.

a. Learning activities must prepare students for professional practice with patients/clients with various conditions, including, but not limited to overweight and obesity; endocrine disorders; cancer; malnutrition and cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and renal diseases.

b. Learning activities must prepare students to implement the Nutrition Care Process with various populations **and diverse cultures.**

- c. Learning activities must address and build competency in diversity, equity and inclusion. The program must ensure that students have the skills to recognize biases in self and others and embrace the diversity of the human experience.
- d. Learning activities must incorporate a variety of educational approaches necessary for delivery of curriculum content to meet learner needs and to facilitate learning objectives.
 - 1. If any portion of the program is offered through distance education, the program assures regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty.

HEC Core Courses:

HEC 2065 Families in Society

HEC 3011 Consumer Economics

HEC Dietetic Courses:

HEC 2020 Nutrition for Health Sciences

HEC 2240 Food Preparation & Management

HEC 3201 Community Nutrition

HEC 3212 Careers and Professional Preparation in Dietetics

HEC 3240 Quantity Food Production

HEC 3270 Nutrition in Disease

HEC 3215 Intro to Nutrition Research

HEC 3290 Nutrition through the Life Cycle

HEC 4200 Advanced Nutrition Research

HEC 4945 Sports and Human Performance Nutrition

HEC 4242 Foodsystems Administration

HEC 4262 Nutrition Applications in the Community

HEC 4271 Medical Nutrition Therapy

HEC 4272 Clinical Dietetics

HEC 4925 Nutrition Counseling and Education

HEC 4100 Cross-Cultural Awareness for Professionals

Biology Courses:

BIOL 2350 Intro Anatomy & Physiology OR BIOL 2010/2020 Anatomy & Physiology I & II

BIOL 3230 Health Science Microbiology

Chemistry Courses:

CHEM 1010, CHEM 1020 General Chemistry

CHEM 3005 Elementary Organic Chemistry

CHEM 4500 Nutritional Biochemistry

Mathematics Courses:

MATH 1530 Introductory Statistics

Communications Courses:

ENG 1010, ENG 1020 Writing I & II

COMM 2025 Fundamentals of Communication

Social/Behavioral Science Courses:

PSY 1030 Introduction to Psychology

SOC 1010 Introduction to Sociology

The following courses are needed to graduate with a BS degree in HEC from TN Tech, but ARE NOT part of the DPD curriculum:

HIST 2010 and HIST 2020 American History (6 credits)

Humanities/Fine Arts (9 credits)

HEC 1040 Connections in Human Ecology – required freshmen orientation class; not required for transfer students

ENGL 2130/2235/2330 Literature (3 credits)

Appendix B
Student Code of Conduct and Signature Page

Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics – TN Tech DPD Program

Self-Presentation: I will present myself in a manner that demonstrates self-respect as well as respect for my peers, professors, and others.

Your attire and behavior can convey a professional attitude. Unique dress is not discouraged, although **unprofessional dress** (e.g. exposed body parts etc.) can be distracting to others and send unintended messages. Consider presenting yourself in a way that *communicates*:

- I am a mature person
- I respect myself
- I respect my audience, peers, professors, students etc.
- I am serious about conveying professional or academic messages

Original Work I will submit or present work that is my own, or cite my sources appropriately. Refer to the TN Tech Student Conduct Code and Academic Integrity Guidelines: [Student Handbook](#)

Developing original ideas or ways of describing them in words is a critical part of success in higher education. Homework assignments, papers, presentations, and exams are all opportunities to practice and hone these skills. Using others' work is crucial in certain situations (e.g., reviewing literature or writing a research paper). Doing so effectively requires use of an accepted citation format. Copying and pasting information from Web sites into a paper is plagiarism, unless the text is in quotes and cited. In summary, give credit where credit is due, do not present someone else's work as your own, and when giving credit to a source, do so in an appropriate way.

Attendance and Class Conduct I will be present in class both physically and mentally. I will make contributions to class that are respectful and relevant to my own learning process and the learning processes of others. My behavior will be professional and appropriate, and not disruptive to class. Each class period is an irreplaceable, interactive learning opportunity. Listening attentively, taking notes, and actively participating in discussions or other activities accelerate learning and also convey interest and respect in others, including professors and classmates. I understand that arriving late, leaving the room in the middle of class, walking out early, studying for other classes, using a cell phone or text messaging, sleeping, etc. is disruptive, distracting, and can hinder others' ability to teach or learn. I will manage my time and commitments so that I can attend all classes to the best of my ability. I will come to class with a focused mind in order to think clearly, focus on understanding what is being communicated, and contribute effectively.

Time Management

I will respect others' time and will follow through on all scheduled time commitments.

Time is valuable to both professors and students. Program participants are responsible for being on time for class meetings, group meetings, and other scheduled appointments. In the unfortunate event of being late or missing a meeting or appointment, I understand I can restore integrity by acknowledging the error and apologizing to others affected. Program participants are also responsible for maintaining an adequate level of availability for communication outside of class. This includes maintaining or using office hours, and checking voice mail and email messages regularly, and responding promptly or within a reasonable time frame.

Emergencies

I will fulfill my academic obligations to the best of my ability. If a personal emergency is preventing me from fulfilling my academic obligations, I will take appropriate action.

In some cases, personal emergencies may jeopardize a participant's ability to fulfill academic commitments successfully by preventing class attendance, causing one to miss due dates for assignments, meetings for group projects, exams etc. Such cases call for clear and early communication with the program director to determine the best course of action. While special consideration and accommodation can be made for students who have temporary unfortunate circumstances, longer term or habitual emergencies may require requesting a leave of absence from the program.

Recommendations

For Faculty: I will write honest and objective recommendations for deserving students with appropriate attention to deadlines.

For Students: I will work to establish positive relationships with all professors from whom I may seek a recommendation for a Dietetic Internship, employment, graduate school, or other opportunity. I will seek recommendations with respect and humility. The following suggestions are appropriate ways to foster positive relationships with recommenders:

- Justify a professor's recommendation with the quality of your work, professionalism, and character.
- Choose individuals to be references who are well acquainted with you and your abilities.
- Request a recommendation in a timely fashion, respectfully, and without presumption.

- Assume that the recommendation will be confidential.
- Acknowledge the time and energy taken to write and submit a recommendation letter with a written thank you to your references.
- Keep in touch with your references and inform them about your progress and whereabouts (you may need additional letters in the future).

Feedback/Evaluation I will actively engage in the program's evaluation processes, to promote its continued improvement and success for present and future participants. For faculty, examples to provide feedback include a professor's comments on student assignments, and faculty-student communications. For students, examples to provide feedback include mid-semester surveys, end of semester teacher or advisor evaluations, one on one meetings, exit interviews for seniors, and follow up surveys for alumni. I understand that providing constructive and relevant feedback is a professional responsibility.

Criteria for Retention in the DPD Program

DPD Retention Procedures

Students who have been admitted to upper division dietetics must maintain a **cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better EACH semester**. A grade of "B" is required for all DPD courses; any grade lower than this will require that course to be retaken and will likely delay time to graduation. A grade of "C" is required for all Science courses; any grade lower than this will require that course to be retaken. Students will be removed from the DPD program when the GPA falls below 3.0 for more than 2 semesters; or students do not retake courses with less than acceptable letter grades. Students may choose to re-apply another semester when grades have improved, courses retaken, and if an upper division slot is available.

Students will be **retained** in the TN Tech DPD program provided the following retention criteria are met EACH semester:

1. Completion of all required courses as outlined on the 120-hour B.S. Degree Curriculum for Human Ecology: Nutrition and Dietetics Concentration
2. **Maintenance of a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 GPA each semester, AND an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 (minimum) in 3000 and 4000 level DPD courses.**
3. Once admitted to upper division, a letter grade of A or B is required in all 3000 and 4000 level DPD courses and a letter grade of C or higher in Science courses each semester.

Acknowledgement Page

I have received a copy of the TN Tech DPD Student Handbook and I have read and understand its contents. I agree to abide by this code of conduct and professional ethics while enrolled in the DPD Program at Tennessee Tech. I understand failure to engage in professional behavior as outlined in this Code of Conduct could forfeit my place in the TN Tech DPD Program.

I understand that a cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to receive a Verification Statement from the TN Tech DPD Program upon graduation.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Faculty Advisor Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Appendix C – RDN Fact Sheet

Careers in Nutrition and Dietetics



Becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

Educational and professional requirements

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) are food and nutrition experts who have met the following criteria and earned the RDN credential:

- **Completed a minimum of a master's degree granted** by a college or university accredited by a U.S. Department of Education (USDE) recognized accrediting agency or foreign equivalent, and coursework through an Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) accredited Didactic (DPD), Coordinated (CP), Graduate Program (GP) or Foreign (FDE) program. For a list of accredited programs, see www.eatrightpro.org/acend.
- **Completed required supervised practice/experience** through an ACEND-accredited Dietetic Internship (DI), Coordinated (CP), Graduate Program (GP), or an Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) offered through an ACEND-accredited program. Information on ACEND-accredited programs is at www.eatrightpro.org/acend.
- **Passed a national examination** administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR). For more information regarding the examination, refer to CDR's website at www cdrnet.org. In order to maintain the credential, an RDN must complete continuing professional educational requirements.

Some RDNs hold additional certifications in specialized areas of practice. These are awarded through CDR, the credentialing agency for the Academy, and/or through other medical and nutrition organizations. These certifications are recognized within the profession, but not required. Some of the certifications include pediatric or renal nutrition, sports dietetics, oncology, gerontological, nutrition support and diabetes education.

In addition, many states have regulatory laws (i.e., licensure) for food and nutrition practitioners. All states accept the RDN credential for state licensure purposes.

College course work

Nutrition and Dietetics students study a variety of subjects, including food and nutrition sciences, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, anatomy, chemistry, foodservice systems, business, pharmacology, culinary arts, behavioral social sciences, and communication.

Employment opportunities

RDNs work in a wide variety of settings, including health care, business and industry, community/public health, education, research, government agencies, and private practice. Many work environments, particularly those in medical and health-care settings, require that an individual be credentialed as an RDN.

RDNs work in:

- **Hospitals, clinics, or other health-care facilities**, educating patients about nutrition and administering medical nutrition therapy as part of the health-care team. They may also manage the foodservice operations in these settings, or schools, day-care centers or correctional facilities, overseeing everything from food purchasing and preparation to managing staff.
- **Sports nutrition and corporate wellness programs**, educating clients about the connection between food, fitness and health.
- **Food and nutrition-related business and industries**, working in communications, consumer affairs, public relations, marketing, product development, or consulting with chefs in restaurants and culinary schools.
- **Private practice**, working under contract with healthcare or food companies, or in their own business. RDNs work with foodservice or restaurant managers, food vendors and distributors, athletes, nursing home residents, or company employees.
- **Community and public health settings**, teaching, monitoring, and advising the public and helping improve quality of life through healthy eating habits.
- **Universities and medical centers**, teaching physician's assistants, nurses, dietetics students, dentists, and others about the sophisticated science of food and nutrition.
- **Research areas** in food and pharmaceutical companies, universities and hospitals directing or conducting experiments to answer critical nutrition questions and find alternative foods or nutrition recommendations for the public.

Careers in Nutrition and Dietetics



Where to start if you already have a degree:

If you already have a bachelor's and/or master's degree that is not in nutrition and dietetics and are interested in becoming a registered dietitian, have your college transcript evaluated by the director of the ACEND-accredited nutrition and dietetics program you wish to attend.

The program director will review your previous academic preparation and identify courses that you will need to complete to meet the educational and supervised practice/experiential learning requirements to be eligible to take the credentialing examination to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN).

Salaries and job outlook

According to the *2021 Compensation & Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession*, the median full-time salary of all RDNs equates to \$72,000 per year. As with any profession, salaries and fees vary by region of the country, employment settings, scope of responsibility, and supply of RDNs. Salaries increase with experience and many RDNs, particularly those in business, management, education, and research earn incomes above \$90,000. For more information, see the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 2021 Compensation and Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession](#).

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of dietitians is projected to grow 7% from 2021-2031, as fast as the average for all occupations, because of the increased emphasis on the role of food and nutrition in preventing and treating diseases, a growing and aging population and public interest in nutrition.

Financial aid

There are many resources to help students pay for college. You may be able to obtain a grant or scholarship from a corporation, community or civic group, philanthropic or religious organization, or directly from your chosen school or college. Federal grants and low-interest loans may also be available.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation offers scholarships to encourage eligible students to enter the field of nutrition and dietetics. Student members of the Academy enrolled in their junior year in an ACEND-accredited program may apply for a Foundation scholarship. Scholarships are also available for student members in ACEND-accredited dietetic internships and graduate studies. Contact the Academy's Accreditation and Education Programs Team (800/877-1600, ext. 5400 or education@eatright.org) for scholarship information.

Need more information?

Go to www.eatrightpro.org and click on "Careers" for more information. The site also lists the nutrition and dietetics education programs accredited by ACEND at www.eatrightpro.org/acend.

For other career guidance information, contact the Accreditation and Education Programs Team (800/877-1600, ext. 5400 or education@eatright.org).

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Accreditation and Education Programs Team
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995
Phone: 800/877-1600, ext. 5400
Fax: 312/899-4817
E-mail: education@eatright.org

The **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics** is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

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Appendix D – RDN Job List

Registered Dietitian's Job List

This is a comprehensive list of job opportunities for Registered Dietitians (RDs), categorized by specialties. Explore the various fields, from clinical and community nutrition to sports, research, and more, to find potential career paths that align with your interests and expertise.

1. Clinical Dietitian's

- *Director of Food and Nutrition Services*^{*}
- *Clinical Nutrition Manager*^{*}
- *Patient Services Manager*^{*}
- Critical Care Dietitians
- Cardiac Dietitians
- Gastrointestinal Dietitians
- Diabetes Educators
- Nephrology Dietitians
- Neurology Dietitians
- Pediatric Dietitians (in clinical settings)
- Bariatric Dietitians

2. Community Dietitians:

- *Health Coach*^{*}
- *Health Magazine Editor*^{*}
- *WIC Nutritionist*^{*}
- Public Health Dietitians
- School Dietitians
- Community Outreach Dietitians
- Wellness Coordinators
- Grocery Store Dietitians
- Hotels

3. Sports Dietitians:

- *Exercise Physiologist*^{*}
- Athletic Performance Dietitians
- Endurance Sports Dietitians
- Team Sports Dietitians

**Roles compiled with insights from [Dietitian Dream Jobs E-book](#)*

4. **Pediatric Dietitians:**
 - Neonatal Dietitians
 - Childhood Obesity Specialists
 - Pediatric Gastrointestinal Dietitians
5. **Gerontological Dietitians:**
 - Elderly Nutrition Specialists
 - Long-Term Care Dietitians
6. **Renal Dietitians:**
 - Dialysis Dietitians
 - Kidney Transplant Dietitians
7. **Oncology Dietitians:**
 - Cancer Treatment Support Dietitians
 - Survivorship Dietitians
8. **Eating Disorder Dietitians:**
 - Anorexia Nervosa Specialists
 - Bulimia Nervosa Specialists
 - Binge-Eating Disorder Specialists
9. **Food Service Dietitians:**
 - *Retail Dietitian**
 - *Food Stylist**
 - *Restaurant Consultant**
 - Menu Development Specialists
 - Culinary Nutritionists
 - Food Safety and Sanitation Experts
10. **Dietitians in Research**
 - *Nutraceutical Formulation**
 - *Nutrition App Creator**
 - *Researcher**
 - Nutrigenomics

*Roles compiled with insights from *Dietitian Dream Jobs E-book*

11. Dietitians in Corporate

- *Marketing Director*^{*}
- *Pharmaceutical Sales Representative*^{*}
- Enteral Formula Manufacturers
 - Nestle
 - Abbott
- Corporate Wellness
- Cookbook Publishers
 - Health and Wellness Magazines
 - Nutrition Journals
 - Medical journals
 - Educational Publishers
 - Nutritional Blogs and Websites
 - Lifestyle magazines
 - Textbook Publishers
 - Culinary Publishers
- Food Manufacturers
- Beverage Manufacturers
- Supplement Companies
- Bakeries
- Diary manufacturers
- Frozen food manufacturers
- Meat and Poultry Processors
- Plant-Based and Vegan food Companies
- Snack-Food Company
- Condiment Manufacturer
- Baby-food company
- Cereal and Breakfast Food Manufacturers

12. Dietitians in Education

- *Dietetic Internship Director*^{*}
- *Education Specialist*^{*}
- *Nutrition Writer*^{*}
- *Freelance Writer*^{*}
- *Ghost Writer*^{*}
- Higher Education (Professor)
 - Universities
 - Colleges
- Research Institutions
- Extension Specialist
- Extension Instructor/ Educator – Food, Nutrition & Health
 - *Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior*

**Roles compiled with insights from [Dietitian Dream Jobs E-book](#)*

13. Entrepreneurial Dietitians

- *Private Practice Dietitian*^{*}
- *Professional Speaker*^{*}
- *Website Developer*^{*}
- *Nutrition Communications*^{*}
- *Health Education Specialist*^{*}
- *Nutrition Podcaster*^{*}
- *Meal Prepping*^{*}
- *Restaurant Owner*^{*}
- *Program Consultant*^{*}
- *Regulatory Dietitian*^{*}
- Eating Disorders

14. Governing Agencies Dietitians

- **Federal Agencies:**
 - USDA (United States Department of Agriculture)
 - FDA (Food and Drug Administration)
 - CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
 - NIH (National Institutes of Health)
 - Health Departments
- **Specialized Programs:**
 - WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
 - HHS (Department of Health and Human Services)
 - *Commissioned Corps: [Apply Now](#)*
- **Educational and Healthcare Institutions:**
 - Department of Education
 - Veterans' Health Administration (VA)
- **International Organizations:**
 - WHO (World Health Organization)
- **Military:**
 - Various branches of the military

**The content of this list includes adapted suggestions from the ['Dietitian Dream Jobs E-Book'](#), utilized with permission from [allaccessdietetics.com](#). For in-depth information and detailed descriptions of these coveted positions, we recommend referring to [All Access Dietetics](#) for a wealth of valuable and complimentary resources.*

Appendix E
Dietetics Applicant and Program Traffic Rules from DICAS

Dietetics Applicant and Program Traffic Rules

These traffic guidelines have been established by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) Dietetics Application Process Task Force and approved by the ACEND Board. These traffic rules represent the guidelines under which the nutrition and dietetics supervised practice programs [Dietetic Internships (DIs), Coordinated Programs (CPs), and Graduate Programs (GPs)] and their institutions have agreed to conduct the annual admissions process.

A. Applicant Traffic Rules

Applicants to dietetics programs, although some are not yet members of the dietetics profession, are bound to legal and ethical standards of behavior during the admission process.

TRAFFIC RULES FOR ALL APPLICANTS:

As an applicant to the profession of nutrition and dietetics, I pledge to:

- Act with honesty and integrity throughout the admission process when interacting with nutrition and dietetics programs, including program directors, faculty, staff, and Dietetics Inclusive Centralized Application System (DICAS) staff.
 - As an applicant, I will submit my own thoughts and original work/not falsify or plagiarize information in my application and/or interview.
- Be responsible and accountable for my actions.
 - I will personally manage and respond to all matters related to my application.
 - I will respond promptly to all communication from all programs.
- Be respectful of decisions made by admission faculty and staff involved in the admission process.
 - I understand that programs are not required to provide details about decisions or offer suggestions to improve my application.
- Abide by the Admission Traffic Rules for Applicants.

ADMISSIONS TRAFFIC RULES FOR APPLICANTS:

Applicants applying to programs outside of their current institution, regardless of the use of DICAS, should follow these traffic rules.

- You may **not** be enrolled in more than one program at any time.
- In fairness to other applicants and nutrition and dietetics programs, if you have decided before November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring) **not** to attend a program that has offered you admission, promptly withdraw your application from the program(s) by contacting the program director.
- Once you have accepted an offer, if you were offered admission to other programs, you **MUST** contact the program director(s) to decline offer(s). This allows waitlisted applicants to be given an offer.
- If you receive and accept an alternative offer after you have already accepted an offer, you **MUST** rescind/withdraw your acceptance at the program where you had previously accepted an offer within 24 hours of accepting the offer at the new program.
- If you are interested in programs starting in the fall, you may apply to those programs with a fall start that have open applications in both the fall application timeframe and spring application timeframe.

Applicant Traffic Rule Violations

ACEND serves as a clearinghouse for reports of possible applicant and program misconduct. Questions about the Applicant Traffic Rules should be directed to ACEND@eatright.org.

B. Programs Traffic Rules

Nutrition and dietetics programs are bound to the Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession and must abide by a set of core values during the admission process: customer focus, integrity, innovation, social responsibility and diversity ([Code of Ethics for RDNs and NDTRs](#)).

Note: All programs that provide dietetics supervised practice (DIs, CPs, GPs) are required to participate in the Dietetics Inclusive Centralized Application System (DICAS)*.

**Does not apply to applicants selected within the same institution (e.g., Sophomore CP student applying to a CP for their junior year; DPD-DI in same institution; DI programs accepting their own employees into the program).*

TRAFFIC RULES FOR PROGRAMS:

As a nutrition and dietetics program, we pledge to:

- Act with honesty and integrity throughout the admission process when interacting with nutrition and dietetics applicants, other program directors, faculty, staff, and DICAS staff.
- Abide by the Admission Traffic Rules for programs.

ACEND encourages each of its member programs and institutions to conduct an application process that is inclusive and professional. The purpose of these traffic rules is to allow applicants to explore their options with each nutrition and dietetics program in a fair manner.

ADMISSIONS TRAFFIC RULES FOR PROGRAMS:

ACEND adopted the following Admissions Traffic Rules for Nutrition and Dietetics Education Programs. For questions, please contact ACEND@eatright.org.

Throughout the Cycle

- Programs may continue to market and recruit applicants.
- Program openings can be offered to waitlisted applicants as they become available.
- Programs with available positions may reopen their DICAS application for interested applicants by changing their application due dates, allowing applicants to submit their application. Programs must still adhere to the key dates for fall and spring.

On or Before November 1 (Fall) or March 1 (Spring)

- Each individual program sets their own application deadline.
- Programs may begin extending offers of admission on applications deemed complete by the program at any time during the admissions cycle.

- Programs should notify all applicants by November 1 (Fall) or March 1 (Spring) if they receive an offer, are waitlisted, or are rejected.
- Programs should indicate to applicants whether deposits, if applicable, are non-refundable, including those voluntarily paid before the deposit deadline.
- Notes:
 - Applicants may not be required to notify programs of their decision until on or after November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring).
 - Programs may not coerce applicants to accept an offer before November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring). Examples of coercion include, but are not limited to:
 - Offering applicants discounted tuition if they accept the offer prior to November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring).
 - Informing applicants that the offer cannot be guaranteed if they wait to accept it by the last day of November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring).

On or Before November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring)

- Programs that require a deposit from applicants to hold their spot may not coerce applicants to pay the deposit before November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring).
 - If voluntarily paid by the applicant, programs can accept the deposit before November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring).
 - For programs accepting deposits, programs must indicate on their website whether the deposit is refundable.

Program Traffic Rules Violations

ACEND serves as a clearinghouse for reports of possible applicant and program misconduct. Questions about the Program Traffic Rules should be directed to ACEND@eatright.org.