

# *Preceptor Handbook*

**Department of Nutritional Sciences  
University of Georgia**

**Graduate Degree/Dietetic Internship Program  
(Fully Accredited)**

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*Adapted from Georgia State University Coordinated Program, Eastern Carolina University Dietetic Internship and Oregon Health and Science University Dietetic Internship*

Thank you, Preceptors!

You have an enormous and invaluable impact on the education of aspiring practitioners. Your expertise plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of our dietetic internship program in training our future professionals.

We recognize that you perform your preceptor role in addition to your other work responsibilities without additional compensation or tangible rewards.

We deeply appreciate your dedication and applaud your professional commitment.

Please know we are here to support your efforts!

Thank you!

*UGA Dietetic Internship Faculty, Staff, and Interns*

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## Mission Statement

Optimal food and nutrient intake play a critical role in health promotion and disease prevention. There is an increasing demand for professionals in the field of dietetics who can provide quality food and nutrition care services to individuals and groups. The mission of the Combined Graduate/Dietetic Internship program is to prepare a diverse group of students as entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists for successful careers in dietetics and encourage students to assume leadership roles in their profession and in society.

## Program Goals

1. Program graduates will be prepared to be competent entry-level dietitians or professionals in fields related to dietetics.
2. Graduates will have demonstrated proficiency in understanding and communicating current research findings.

## Objectives/Outcome Measures

1. At least 80% of program graduates complete program/degree requirements within 3 years (150% of the program length).
2. The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of the first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.
3. Of graduates who seek employment, 70% are employed in nutrition and dietetic or related fields within 12 months of graduation.
4. At least 80% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within registration 12 months of program completion.
5. At least 80% of program graduates will be rated as "more than satisfactory" or "outstanding" by surveyed job supervisors in 50% of the 19 selected knowledge and skill areas.
6. At least 50% of program graduates surveyed will pursue further education, additional degrees or certifications, and/or be active in professional organizations or in legislative activities.
7. At least 70% of graduates surveyed will report that they have demonstrated proficiency in translating current research findings to others with positive rating.
8. At least 50% of graduates surveyed will have engaged in scholarly activity at the local, regional, state or national level, such as presenting research findings at a conference or submitting a manuscript for publication or submitting a grant proposal.

*All Outcome Data are available upon request.*

Recent program assessment shows that we are surpassing all program benchmarks, and we extend our sincere gratitude to you for contributing to this achievement. Your role has been integral to our students' learning and overall success.

## Accreditation Status

The Combined Graduate/Internship Program in Dietetics is currently granted accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), 120 South Riverside Plaza Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, 800/877-1600, ext. 5400; [ACEND@eatright.org](mailto:ACEND@eatright.org).

## Educational Philosophy of the Dietetic Internship

The teaching philosophy of the Dietetic Internship reflects the belief that the best learning occurs when students are challenged to apply content and concepts to the real world. Both students and instructors are responsible for focusing on active learning and holistic understanding of nutrition/dietetics concepts. Mentors should foster this sense by placing emphasis on improvement and active participation as rather than rigid repetition of facts and theories. Overall, mentors should support students inside and outside the classroom, pushing them to achieve professional and personal goals.

## Role of the Preceptor & Training Requirements

By definition, a preceptor is one who teaches or instructs. The preceptor's role is critical in preparing students to function as dietitian nutritionists. Being a dietetic preceptor introduces additional responsibilities and requires professionalism and dedication. In addition, your facility has agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding to precept students. Many preceptors may not always feel prepared for their role in educating and evaluating students. Through this guide, we hope to assist you in developing your teaching, communication, and evaluation skills as you strive to be effective preceptors to students.

### Training Requirements

Per 2022 ACEND Standards, program preceptors must be trained on the following:

- orientation to the mission, goals and objectives of (our) program and ACEND Standards and required knowledge and competencies
- strategies to recognize and monitor biases in self and others and reduce instances of microaggressions and discriminations

### Training is required:

- Before working with students
- At least once per accreditation cycle
- When program or accreditation updates occur
- Based on program evaluation

Our program has prepared a slideshow presentation with all of this information as well as links to additional training in the required areas. Please document your training using the link on the last slide of the presentation.

## What is Supervised Practice?

Practice is what you, the preceptor, does every day. The intent of supervised practice is to give the student the opportunity to learn what it is that you do and develop the skills needed for an entry-level position in the field of dietetics. Students should not be expected to perform your job at the same level as you but should have the ability to practice and develop their skills under your supervision. A good starting point would be to think of training a new employee. Orient the student to the facility, and start going over the tasks you complete on a day-to-day basis. Allow the student to observe and then practice what they have learned. Students will learn more when allowed to practice, get feedback, and practice again. Solely observing does not increase student confidence. A meaningful rotation is one that provides a positive work environment and encourages the student to contribute to the team.

## Benefits of Being a Preceptor

There are numerous benefits to being a preceptor. Some common benefits include:

1. Receive FREE Continuing Professional Education  
As of June 1, 2017, preceptors may record a total of 15 CPEUs per 5-year cycle for precepting and/or leadership on their Activity Log. All you need to do is complete a “Verification and Self-reflection Form” and have it signed by the Program Director. ACEND also offers a free online Preceptor Training Course that awards 8 CEUs. See “Additional Preceptor Training and Continuing Education” section below for more details about these opportunities.
2. Professional Development & Satisfaction of Shaping Future Registered Dietitian Nutritionists  
As RD roles in healthcare continue to evolve, our excellence becomes increasingly critical. As a dedicated RD, you’ve invested significant time and effort in honing your skills. Precepting gives you the opportunity to mentor students, helping them develop their own abilities. By doing so, you contribute to a brighter future for RDs.
3. Providing Service to the Dietetic Profession  
All RDs have completed supervised practice programs where they worked with preceptors. If you ever ask an RD about their greatest experiences during their supervised practice program, they often say the rotations and their preceptors. Providing service to the profession is often noted as an intangible benefit of precepting.
4. Makes the Job More Interesting  
Jobs, no matter what the job, can get monotonous. Students break the routine. They bring questions, insight, and provoke discussion. They can also free up the RD for more pressing work.
5. Recruitment of Future Colleagues  
When a student has had a satisfying experience at your facility, they are more likely to want to pursue a career there in the future. Many students become entry-level RDs in facilities where they have completed rotations.
6. Students Can Complete Needed Projects/Staff Relief  
Most RDs have multiple projects that have been put on hold due to time restrictions. Students are the perfect candidates to assist in completing those projects. Also, near the end of the rotation, students should be competent enough to provide some staff relief.
7. Increase Awareness of New Research  
Students are exposed to the most up-to-date research in their courses, thesis, and research projects. Many preceptors report learning from the students as a strength of precepting.
8. Students Bring New Ideas  
Students have been rotating through other facilities and can share things they have learned along the way. In addition, it’s always nice to have “fresh eyes” view your projects and give you feedback. Students are often innovative and good at finding more efficient approaches to standard processes that may leverage newer technologies or enhance accessibility for others.
9. Teaching Students Increases Preceptor Knowledge  
In preparing to take students, preceptors often review current material to teach the material in an effective way. Students ask questions that provoke discussion & increase knowledge.

#### 10. Adds Prestige to Your Job

Mentoring students is seen as a contribution to your profession and should be added to your resume. If you would like to be considered for a preceptor recognition award, please ask the Program Director for more information.

### Preceptor Tips

#### Characteristics of an Effective Preceptor

- Is organized and focused
- Presents a positive attitude and commitment toward the profession
- Values student-Preceptor interactions and relates well to students
- Is dynamic and enthusiastic
- Participates in local nutritional organizations and continuing education
- Models professional behavior
- Is competent and confident
- Creates atmosphere for open communication and answers questions clearly and precisely
- Supports students with appropriate, frequent feedback in a timely fashion
- Challenges students to perform by giving them increasing responsibility
- Demonstrates respect and patience as students continue to learn
- Applies evidence-based guidelines when making recommendations
- Communicates clear goals and expectations
- Is open to contradictory ideas and opinions
- Performs fair and thoughtful evaluations

#### Tips for the First Day

A lot happens on the first day of a rotation. The first day is a day of first impressions, a day when you and your student get to know each other, and a day of orientation. The following tips can help you successfully accomplish all of this.

- Ask your student these potential questions to get to know him/her better:
  - What would you like to get out of this rotation?
  - What are your hopes and concerns regarding this rotation?
  - What is your learning style? (visual, auditory, read/write, hands-on)
  - What questions do you have?
- Help your student get to know you by:
  - Sharing the pathway you took to this profession and to your current position. Students will soon be at a major crossroad in their lives. Hearing the stories of others could be helpful to them.
  - Sharing why you like your job and/or what attracted you to this profession.
- Help orient the student to your job by sharing with your student:
  - Your main responsibilities to provide an idea of the day-to-day work
  - Your method of communication with your other team members
  - Your method of prioritizing your responsibilities
  - Your resources and where to find them
  - Any “tricks of the trade” you use to help you accomplish your job

## Handling Difficult Situations with Interns

First and foremost, preceptors should contact the Program Director immediately for any significant problems with students. The Program Director will email preceptors soon after rotations begin to check on intern performance and provide a cell phone number for immediate communication. Generally speaking, our dietetic interns pass rigorous screening and are high-achieving, professional young adults. Typically, preceptors are very pleased with their work and overall performance.

### Difficult situations may be a result of:

1. Inadequate knowledge prior to the rotation or skill deficiencies
2. Personality difficulties or cultural differences
3. Situation challenges (e.g., a student's experiences causing difficulties working in certain settings)
4. On-going medical problems
5. Lack of self-confidence
6. Miscommunication or lack of communication

### Suggestions for dealing with difficult situations:

1. Frequent, ongoing evaluation so that students know exactly what areas need strengthening
2. Problems should be identified and dealt with as early as possible
3. Make consequences of actions clear to the student from the beginning
4. Rules and expectations should be communicated early
5. For knowledge deficiencies, students can be given extra reading to do outside of the rotation
6. For situation difficulties, talk to the student about feelings that make them apprehensive
7. Use the Program Director as a reference. Significant problems should be communicated to the Director as early as possible.

## Additional Preceptor Training and Continuing Education

1. Each year, the Program Director will send out a Preceptor Handbook with the program's current mission, goals, and objectives as well as the ACEND requirements and tips on how to be an effective preceptor. The Program Director will also send updates on ACEND or curriculum changes to support training of students. Preceptors are encouraged to contact the Program Director at any time with questions, suggestions or concerns.
2. ACEND offers a free online module to preceptors of dietetics students to help prepare for and excel in their important role. The module awards **8 continuing professional education units (CPEUs)** for completing 7 modules covering topics such as facilitating student learning and preparing for the preceptor role. The module can be accessed at: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/acend-training-and-volunteer-opportunities/preceptors-and-mentors/preceptor-training-program>
3. All preceptors can record 3 CPEUs for precepting per year, for a total of **15 CPEUs** during a 5-year cycle, under Activity type 190: Professional Leadership and Precepting. Preceptors must complete a *Preceptor Self-Reflection and Verification* form that is signed by UGA's Program Director. For more information, please visit: <https://www.cdrnet.org/cpeu-credit-for-Preceptors>

4. Review Nutrition and Dietetic Educators and Preceptor's "Guide to Being an Effective Preceptor" for **1 free CPEU**. Consider joining NDEP, an Academy DPG, for the most current information regarding nutrition and dietetic education programs. Link to a recorded webinar: <https://eatright.webex.com/eatright/ldr.php?RCID=00b439e0615cff9ba448a070ee8e73de>
5. Preceptor Certificate of Appreciation can be provided by the Program Director upon request.

### **Additional (optional) Resources**

1. Preceptor Orientation Checklist: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/-/media/files/eatrightpro/ndep/ndep-pdfs/preceptor-training-di-orientation-checklist.pdf?rev=504fce3aafec48158becaf3ae679fa5c&hash=8C7F297623951D036803329F5ECA2062>
2. Preceptor Resource Tool Kit (from NDEP): <https://www.eatrightpro.org/-/media/files/eatrightpro/ndep/ndep-pdfs/ndep-preceptor-resource-tool-kit.pdf?rev=603233fa300e4e2f88b2033407997ea8&hash=0EDF3B74F6C261A5A29734110E61B38E>
3. Guide to Being an Effective Preceptor: Part 1: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/-/media/files/eatrightpro/ndep/ndep-pdfs/guide-to-being-an-effective-preceptor-part-1-slides.pdf?rev=e4bc072641ab4803ae761ed4534596a4&hash=1181AF6B2B14692BB14A456AB5C868C6>
4. Guide to Being an Effective Preceptor: Part 2: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/-/media/files/eatrightpro/ndep/ndep-pdfs/guide-to-being-an-effective-preceptor-part-2-slides.pdf?rev=c2af7ce573cf47968e1553d72da4ff27&hash=81396A482FFBF6A4160F9B79E64BD926>

These and additional resources are provided on Typhon under Program Documents.

### **Time Logs, Case Logs & Intern Evaluations (Typhon)**

Our program is now using an intuitive and secure student tracking platform called Typhon, which simplifies logging, tracking, and managing of student data. Typhon allows clinical coordinators, faculty, and preceptors to track students' progress in real time as they learn in rotation settings. Preceptors will be provided with a login (expect an email from Typhon) to allow access to the system for completing Intern Evaluations and approving Time Logs, Case Logs, and/or Evidence Documents uploaded by interns assigned to them. Preceptors are able to customize their settings within Typhon. Instructions for using Typhon are provided within the system under the Help Section, and program-specific instructions and training materials are provided as Program Documents within Typhon. If preceptors have trouble accessing this platform, they can contact the Program Director or Program Assistant for guidance at any time.

#### **Time Logs on Typhon**

Interns will log hours weekly using Typhon. Preceptors should approve Time Logs on a regular basis. If an intern needs to request an absence, they should contact the preceptor in a timely manner for approval (cc'ing the Program Director). Any problems should be discussed with the Program Director, also in a timely manner, to prevent issues from arising.

Interns have required hours to meet for each rotation, which includes any assigned work that may be completed off-site. Interns should not be asked to work hours beyond their required hours. Time spent on internship activities should be related to RD work and the intern competencies. ACEND requires that interns must spend at least 70% of the required hours on-site (defined as “in the same location as the preceptor”) to ensure consistent communication and support is available for the intern. Interns must complete all work under RD supervision. When a competency requires a task typically performed by another healthcare provider, the supervising RD should coordinate with that provider to oversee and evaluate the intern's progress.

### **Case Logs on Typhon**

For clinical rotations, interns are required to document at least 4 Case Logs to show the depth and breadth of cases they experience at each facility. Any patient experience where a competency is evaluated should be entered as a Case Log. Preceptors should approve all Case Logs before the end of the rotation.

### **Evaluating Interns on Typhon**

Preceptors will complete Intern Evaluations in Typhon, typically at the end of the rotation (**no later than July 31<sup>st</sup>**). Evaluations will be assigned to Preceptors, and Preceptors may view them and save progress over time before submitting. We encourage preceptors to discuss feedback with interns to help them realize their strengths and grow their skills. The main preceptor will be the only person allowed to complete the evaluation, but they can take information from all preceptors into account when providing feedback. If a different preceptor needs to complete the application than originally assigned, please contact the Program Director ASAP.

### **Preceptor Portal**

Our Preceptor Portal webpage is designed to connect preceptors to resources and to store items and information in a central location. It may accessed here: <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fdn/di-preceptor-portal>. Information will be added to it as time allows and needs arise. The website houses our Preceptor Handbook, program & training information, competency support, internship photos, Dawg Digest Newsletters (also sent by email), and much more!

## Faculty and Staff Contact Information



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## Competencies/Learning Outcomes for Dietetic Internship Programs (2022 Standards)

Interns have competencies to complete at each rotation and are responsible for showing those to their preceptors at the start of the rotation and getting them checked off on Competency Rating Tables. These tables are completed by hand. Preceptors will also be given a copy of Competency Rating Tables for their reference along with sample activities. If there is a plan to evaluate an intern on a competency using a different activity than what is listed next to the competency in the Competency Rating Table, interns must first gain approval from the program director that that activity measures the competency in a manner satisfactory to ACEND.

### **1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice: integration of scientific information and research into practice**

- 1.1. Select indicators of program quality and/or customer service and measure achievement of objectives
- 1.2. Evaluate research and apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature in nutrition and dietetics practice
- 1.3. Justify programs, products, services and care using appropriate evidence or data
- 1.4. Conduct projects using appropriate research or quality improvement methods, ethical procedures and data analysis utilizing current and/or new technologies
- 1.5. Incorporate critical-thinking skills in overall practice

### **2. Professional Practice Expectations: beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the professional dietitian level of practice**

- 2.1. Practice in compliance with current federal regulations and state statutes and rules, as applicable, and in accordance with accreditation standards and the Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Standards of Practice, Standards of Professional Performance, and Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics
- 2.2. Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications
- 2.3. Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings
- 2.4. Function as a member of interprofessional teams
- 2.5. Work collaboratively with NDTRs and/or support personnel in other disciplines
- 2.6. Refer clients and patients to other professionals and services when needs are beyond individual scope of practice
- 2.7. Apply change management strategies to achieve desired outcomes
- 2.8. Demonstrate negotiation skills
- 2.9. Actively contribute to nutrition and dietetics professional and community organizations
- 2.10. Demonstrate professional attributes in all areas of practice
- 2.11. Show cultural humility in interaction with colleagues, staff, clients, patients and the public
- 2.12. Implement culturally sensitive strategies to address cultural biases and differences
- 2.13. Advocate for local, state or national legislative and regulatory issues or policies impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession

### **3. Clinical and Customer Services: development and delivery of information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations**

- 3.1. Perform Medical Nutrition Therapy by utilizing the Nutrition Care Process including use of standardized nutrition terminology as a part of the clinical workflow elements for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of settings

- 3.2. Conduct nutrition focused physical assessment
- 3.3. Perform routine health screening assessments including measuring blood pressure, conducting waived point-of-care laboratory testing (such as blood glucose or cholesterol), recommending and/or initiating nutrition-related pharmacotherapy plans (such as modifications to bowel regimens, carbohydrate to insulin ratio, B12 or iron supplementation)
- 3.4. Provide instruction to clients/patients for self-monitoring blood glucose considering diabetes medication and medical nutrition therapy plan
- 3.5. Explain the steps involved and observe the placement of nasogastric or nasoenteric feeding tubes; if available, assist in the process of placing nasogastric or nasoenteric feeding tubes
- 3.6. Conduct a swallow screen and refer to the appropriate health care professional for a full swallow evaluation when needed
- 3.7. Demonstrate effective communication and documentation skills for clinical and client services in a variety of formats and settings, which include telehealth and other information technologies and digital media
- 3.8. Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience
- 3.9. Develop nutrition education materials that are culturally and age appropriate and designed for the literacy level of the audience
- 3.10. Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change
- 3.11. Develop and deliver products, programs or services that promote consumer health, wellness and lifestyle management
- 3.12. Deliver respectful, science-based answers to client/patient questions concerning emerging trends
- 3.13. Coordinate procurement, production, distribution and service of goods and services, demonstrating and promoting responsible use of resources
- 3.14. Develop and evaluate recipes, formulas and menus for acceptability and affordability that accommodate the cultural diversity and health needs of various populations, groups and individuals.

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

- 4.1. Participate in management functions of human resources (such as hiring, training and scheduling)
- 4.2. Perform management functions related to safety, security and sanitation that affect employees, clients, patients, facilities and food
- 4.3. Conduct clinical and client service quality management activities (such as quality improvement or quality assurance projects)
- 4.4. Apply current information technologies to develop, manage, and disseminate nutrition information and data
- 4.5. Analyze quality, financial and productivity data for use in planning
- 4.6. Propose and use procedures as appropriate to the practice setting to promote sustainability, reduce waste and protect the environment
- 4.7. Conduct feasibility studies for products, programs or services with consideration of costs and benefits
- 4.8. Develop a plan to provide or develop a product, program or service that includes a budget, staffing needs, equipment and supplies

- 4.9. Engage in the process for coding and billing for nutrition and dietetics services to obtain reimbursement from public or private payers, fee-for-service and value-based payment systems
- 4.10. Analyze risk in nutrition and dietetics practice (such as risks to achieving set goals and objectives, risk management plan, or risk due to clinical liability or foodborne illness).

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

- 5.1. Perform self-assessment that includes awareness in terms of learning and leadership styles and cultural orientation and develop goals for self-improvement
- 5.2. Identify and articulate one’s skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals
- 5.3. Prepare a plan for professional development according to Commission on Dietetic Registration guidelines
- 5.4. Advocate for opportunities in the professional settings (such as asking for additional responsibility, practicing negotiating a salary or wage or asking for a promotion)
- 5.5. Demonstrate the ability to resolve conflict
- 5.6. Promote team involvement and recognize the skills of each member
- 5.7. Mentor others
- 5.8. Identify and articulate the value of precepting

### Student Intern Evaluation by Preceptors

The competencies (CRDNs) listed above are divided among various rotations that our interns complete, while some are obtained in courses taken in our program.

Rotations & Coursework where Competencies are Assessed	
Coursework	NUTR 7000/9000 – Nutrition Research NUTR 8560 – Proposal Writing NUTR 8900 – Nutritional Sciences Seminar NUTR 7911 – Dietetics Supervised Practice & Professional Development
Rotations	Year 1 – Community Year 1 – General Clinical (Medical Nutrition Therapy I) – MNT 1 Year 1 – Foodservice Management (FSM) Year 2 – Community Year 2 – Advanced Clinical (Medical Nutrition Therapy II) – MNT 2 Year 2 – Nutrition Support

- **Competency Tables:** Review the relevant Competency Table for your site/rotation (e.g., MNT vs. FSM) on the Preceptor Portal webpage. All competencies for MNT 1 & 2 and Nutrition Support rotations are in the same table. Interns typically have 3 clinical rotations, so they do NOT need to complete all competencies in one rotation. **Please read the instructions carefully.** 😊
- **Discuss Competencies:** At the beginning of the rotation, discuss competencies with interns. Make sure everyone is on the same page, and assess all possible competencies before rotations end. Interns are encouraged to review the relevant Competency Table beforehand and mark the CRDNs they expect to complete during their rotation. While you know more about specific experiences possible at your facility, this planning exercise is useful for interns.

- **Rating and Sign-Off:** Rate and sign off on each competency as interns complete them. Ideally, interns should continue practicing until they achieve a rating of 3 or higher. Even if a competency was met in a separate rotation (some overlap exists), or if a CRDN was rated 3 or less, additional practice can be valuable (e.g., NFPE or blood pressure measurements)
- **Multiple Tables:** Some CRDNs are listed on 2+ tables, allowing assessment in different rotations (e.g., CRDN 1.1 can be assessed in MNT and/or FSM rotations). The tables contain related notes.
- **Preferred Activities or Substitutes:** Use preferred competency assessment activities or document substitute activities in detail. Interns must seek approval from their Program Director for substitutes to meet ACEND requirements. Feedback can be added to the last page of the table.
- **Evidence/Documentation:** Help interns acquire evidence/documentation of assessment activities that meet competencies. ACEND requires this documentation, so interns may ask to scan notes or document their activities. If any activities can't be documented, alert the Program Director for alternative solutions. Interns have a list of evidence they should keep for each activity.