



PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT
Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics/Dietetic Internship
Program (MS/DI)
Department of Health Behavior and Nutrition Sciences

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I: Program Overview

A. Mission Statement

To become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN), individuals must complete a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), a graduate degree, and at least 1,000 hours of supervised practice in an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program. The MS in Nutrition and Dietetics/Dietetic Internship (MS/DI) program combines the required graduate degree and the ACEND-accredited supervised practice program, and is therefore the final step for students wishing to sit for the Registration Examination for Dietitians (RD Exam) to earn the RDN credential.

The mission of the MS/DI program is to prepare entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists through engagement in the methods, implementation and interpretation of nutrition science, and to apply and advance the field of nutrition through research, clinical, management or community areas of practice.

B. Current Status

The MS/DI program began enrolling students in 2019 and has been continuously accredited by ACEND, with the most recent reaccreditation occurring in 2023.

C. Degree Offered

Those who complete the program will receive a Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics degree and a Verification Statement certifying completion of an ACEND-accredited dietetic internship.

II: Admission

A. Admission Criteria and Requirements

A.1. *Criteria*

Applicants from diverse educational and professional backgrounds in nutrition are encouraged to apply. Each application will be evaluated individually based on:

- 1) Academic record/achievement;
- 2) Work, research, and/or community health experience;
- 3) Personal statement
- 4) Recommendations

A.2. *Requirements*

Applicants must submit all materials directly to the Dietetics Inclusive Centralized Application Service (DICAS) and the University of Delaware Graduate College using the online admission process to be considered for admission. Admission decisions will be made by the Intern Selection Committee. Students will be admitted to the program based on enrollment availability, and their ability to meet the following **minimum** entrance requirements:

- 1) A Bachelor's degree conferred prior to the start of the MS/DI program with a GPA ≥ 2.75 (3.0 in DPD coursework)
- 2) Verification of completion of the Didactic Program in Dietetics or an Intent to Complete form from an ACEND-accredited undergraduate program
- 3) Recent relevant work or volunteer experience beyond that required for undergraduate course requirements
- 4) A Medical Nutrition Therapy course completed no more than four years prior to application

B. Prior Degree Requirements

A completed bachelor's degree and a Verification Statement from an ACEND-accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) or a DPD Intent to Complete form (if currently completing a Bachelor's degree) is required for admittance to the MS/DI Program.

C. Application Deadlines

Applications (all materials) for the MS/DI program must be submitted by February 15th for admission to the program the following fall semester. Students who are currently enrolled in, or who have graduated from the University of Delaware's Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) are eligible to apply during the preselect round of admission with a January 15 deadline. The program will offer fall admission only. Applicants are strongly advised to complete and submit applications as early as possible.

The admission process at the Department level will be completed as follows: completed applications will be reviewed by the Program Director and applicants who meet the admission criteria will then have their application file reviewed by the Intern Selection Committee. The Program Director and Site Supervisor will conduct interviews with applicants with potential for admission. Committee members will provide feedback on each applicant. The Intern Selection Committee will make final decisions on admission. Admitted students will begin the program in the fall. Admission to the program is limited and not all qualified applicants will be admitted.

D. Admission Categories

Applicants must meet all admissions criteria to be considered for acceptance. The MS/DI program does not provide "conditional" acceptance. The MS/DI is a full-time, 19-month program. Graduate Assistantships are not available for this program.

E. Application Documents Required

MS/DI applicants are required to submit an application using DICAS including:

1. An official transcript from a US regionally-accredited college or university
 2. A DPD verification statement from an ACEND accredited program or a DPD Intent to Complete form (if currently completing a DPD program)
 3. A written personal statement
 4. Current resume
 5. Three letters of recommendation; two academic references and one work or volunteer
- Additionally, students applying during the computer matching round must register with D&D Digital for computer matching.

F. HBNS Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Department of HBNS is committed to sharing values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We believe that we can best promote and endorse these values by recruiting and retaining a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff and by creating a climate of respect that is supportive of their academic success. This climate for diversity, equity, and inclusion is central to achieving our academic potential through research and scholarship, teaching, and service.

The Department of HBNS gives definition to this climate of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community as it is related to:

1. **Access to our Department's Programs and Practices:** We implement academic programs and scholarly practices that seek to provide equitable access and enable all students to grow academically. Specific strategies that we are strongly committed to include:

- a. Active participation in the annual, 6-day College of Health Sciences Summer Camp that provides a deep exploration into health sciences majors and careers for traditionally underrepresented students (e.g., minority, low-income, or [soon to be] first generation students).
 - b. The provision of a dynamic and up to date HBNS website that utilizes culturally diverse images and engages current and potential students, as well as their families, in learning about our ongoing programs.
 - c. Engagement with the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program (the McNair's Scholars Program). The McNair Scholars program is renowned for preparing traditionally underrepresented groups for graduate education.
 - d. Recruitment of students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and organizations. Specifically, we engage with central organizations such as The Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence & Equity (formerly the Delaware Valley Minority Student Achievement Consortium or DVMSAC), and The New Jersey Network to Close the Achievement Gaps to directly market our academic programs to traditionally underserved groups.
2. **Teaching and Learning:** We are rigorous and empathetic teachers who collectively seek to examine and revise our curriculum and teaching practices as necessary to ensure that we are effective in helping all students achieve their academic potential. Specific strategies that we use to promote inclusive teaching and learning include:
- a. Prior to the start of each academic year, graduate students and faculty can participate in an intensive in-service training related to diversity, equity and inclusion. This interactive training focuses on individual cultural competence and specifically works to build participants' cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. At the conclusion of the training, attendees are encouraged to develop a cultural competence plan for an aspect of their work in the coming academic year.
 - b. Faculty are trained and actively encouraged to connect students (both direct advisees and any student who solicits help) with professional groups and organizations that promote diversity and assist in establishing networks as per the Office of Equity and Inclusion at the University of Delaware.
 - c. All DI students in the program are provided with a tailored advising and mentoring plan that is designed to maximize academic success. The University of Delaware's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resources will be consulted in the development of this plan.

G. University Statement

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths as determined by the Intern Selection Committee.

III: Academic Degree: Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics

A. Degree Requirements

The MS/DI Program requires successful completion of a minimum of 39 credits, including coursework, evidence-based project (field) work, successful completion of a comprehensive examination, and at least 1,000 hours of supervised practice. The program is designed to be completed in 19 months.

In addition to the minimum of 39 credit hours, degree requirements for the MS/DI Program include:

1. Comprehensive exam (section A.3.)
2. Evidence-based project poster and oral presentation (section A.4.)

A.1. Coursework and Credit Hours

An outline of the 39 required credit hours is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Outline of MS/DI Program Coursework

Courses	# Credits
NTDT611 Advanced Macro Metabolism	3 credits
NTDT822 Research Methods in Nutrition Assessment	3 credits
NTDT608 Nutrition Program Planning and Evaluation	3 credits
Statistics	3 credits
NTDT elective	3 credits
NTDT812 Current Topics in Nutritional Sciences	3 credits
NTDT810 Nutrition Informatics	3 credits
Non NTDT elective	3 credits
NTDT665 Nutrition Seminar	1 credit
NTDT669 Evidence-Based Project	2 credits
NTDT648 Dietetics Practicum I	4 credits
NTDT649 Dietetics Practicum II	4 credits
NTDT650 Current Perspectives in Dietetics I	2 credits
NTDT651 Current Perspectives in Dietetics II	2 credits
TOTAL CREDITS	39 Credits

A.2. Planned Program of Study

A typical plan for the program of study is shown below in Table 2.

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer I
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NTDT810 (3) ● NTDT812 (3) ● Statistics (3) ● NTDT elective (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NTDT669 (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NTDT608(3) ● NTDT611 (3) ● NTDT665 (1) ● NTDT822* (3) ● Non-NTDT elective (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comprehensive Examination ● NTDT669 (1) ● <i>Comprehensive Examination retake if needed</i>
Year 2* Dietetic Internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NTDT648* (4) ● NTDT650 (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NTDT649* (4) ● NTDT651 (2) 		

*Students complete a minimum of 1,000 supervised practice hours as part of NTDT648 and 649.

A.3. Comprehensive Examination Requirement

A written comprehensive examination will be administered upon completion of the majority of course requirements after the conclusion of the 2nd semester (Spring semester). The three-hour essay examination will be administered at a common time for all exam takers. It will be developed by the program director and three graduate faculty members who will serve as the

Examination Committee for that year. The exam will consist of three categories, Metabolism, Current Issues, and Statistics/Research. A general study guide will be provided. A student who fails any question of the comprehensive examination may petition for a re-exam of that question and will receive suggestions for remediation. A Letter of Intent to retake the exam should be submitted to the MS/DI Graduate Program Leader. The re-take examination must occur within one month of the original exam. Students who do not submit all sections of the comprehensive examination are not eligible for a retake of the missed section(s). The exam may not be taken a third time. Failure to pass the Comprehensive Exam will result in removal from the MS/DI program and such students are not eligible to transfer to the MS in Human Nutrition program. Students will be notified in writing of successful completion of exam. The exam is graded as Pass or Fail for each question; successful completion of the comprehensive evaluation is based on a grade of Pass on all questions (where Pass represents a letter grade of C or higher).

A. 4. Evidence-Based Project Poster and Oral Presentation (NTDT 669)

The purpose of the Evidence-Based Project is to develop critical thinking skills, assimilate research, and/or actively participate in research. The Evidence-Based Project will be composed of:

1. A literature summary table (which will be completed as part of NTDT 812 Current Topics in Nutritional Sciences)
2. Completion of a written publication (e.g., newsletter article) completed for one credit (NTDT669*) during winter session of year 1.
3. An oral presentation and poster summarizing the findings of the Evidence-Based Project, completed for one credit (NTDT669*) during summer after year 1.

*NTDT669 is a standard grading (letter grade) course.

Students will select a topic for the Evidence-Based Project in NTDT812 (Current Topics in Nutritional Sciences, taught in the first semester of the MS/DI program). In addition to the topic, the student will be assigned an Evidence-Based Project advisor based on the topic selected and the faculty available that semester.

It is not recommended that students change Evidence-Based Project advisors after initiating their Evidence-Based Project. If a decision to do so is considered, any change requires joint discussion and signed agreement between the student, the original Evidence-Based Project advisor and the prospective Evidence-Based Project advisor. Written notification is then forwarded to the Graduate Services Coordinator.

B. Faculty Advisor

The Program Director serves as the faculty advisor for all enrolled MS/DI students.

C. Timetable and Definition of Satisfactory Progress toward Degree

C.1. Time Limit for Completing the Degree

The time limit for completion of the MS/DI degree requirements begins with the date of matriculation and is specifically detailed in the student's letter of admission. Students in the MS/DI program must complete the course requirements in the progression outlined in **Table 2**. Students start in the program in the fall, and then take winter, spring, summer, fall, and winter coursework to graduate.

An extension of time limit may be granted for circumstances beyond the student's control. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the MS/DI

Program Leader. The Nutrition Graduate Program Director will forward the request to the Graduate College. The maximum time allowed to complete the program is normally three years.

C.2. Submission of Required University Forms

To initiate the process for the degree conferral, students must submit an “Application for Advanced Degree” to the Graduate College. The application deadline is December 15 for Winter graduation candidates. The application must be signed by the Program Director/Advisor and Department Chair. Therefore, routing of the Application form must begin at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. An application fee for MS degree students is required when the application is submitted. Upon completion of the degree audit, the Graduate College will notify students when they have met all degree requirements.

C.3. Grade Requirements for Satisfactory Progress

Failure to satisfactorily progress in the program will be based on the University Graduate Policy as noted below (Table 3). The Graduate College monitors the academic progress of all graduate students and notifies students in writing of all academic deficiencies. The cumulative GPA after each 9-hour increment determines academic standing.

Table 3: The University’s Academic Probation Policy is expressed in the following chart:

If student is on:	And earns a GPA of:	The status becomes:
Any status	3.0 or above	Clear
Clear	2.99-2.5	Warning
Clear	2.49-2.0	Probation
Probation	Below 3.0	Dismissal
Warning	Below 3.0	Probation
Any status	Below 2.0	Dismissal

C.4. Reasons for Dismissal from the Program

The Graduate College notifies students when they are dismissed from graduate programs without completing the program. Dismissals usually take place at the end of a term. Students may be dismissed for reasons stated in the Dismissal Policies of the Graduate College.

In the case of dismissal, the MS/DI Program Director is required to send a report to the Graduate College that states the faculty vote on the decision causing dismissal and the justification for this action. The Graduate College will notify a student in writing when the student is being dismissed for failure to make satisfactory progress in the program.

C.5. Procedures for Student Appeals

Students who receive what they perceive as an unfair evaluation by a faculty member may file a written grievance in accordance with the University of Delaware policies.

Specifically, if the issue remains unresolved after a meeting between the student and the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee, the student may submit a written appeal to the Department Chair within 10 business days of the meeting. The Department Chair will issue a written decision on the appeal, and a description of the proposed resolution within 10 business days of appeal receipt.

In the case of academic dismissal, the student may appeal the termination by writing to the Graduate College. This appeal must be made within 10 class days from the date on which the

student has been notified of academic dismissal. If the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs grants reinstatement, the student must meet the conditions of the reinstatement. Failure to meet these conditions will result in dismissal from the program. A graduate student may be reinstated only once to a given program. The student's academic transcript will reflect the reinstatement with academic probation status.

All access to student records is in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

IV: Assessment Plan and Program Goals

A variety of internal and external mechanisms are used to evaluate the curriculum and overall effectiveness of the MS/DI Program. Established program educational goals (Table 4) will be evaluated on an annual basis.

Table 4: MS/DI Program Goals

MS/DI Program Educational Goals	
1	Students will be able to integrate scientific information and evaluate emerging research for application in nutrition and dietetics practice
2	Students will demonstrate the strong critical thinking and communication skills, professional integrity, ethical behavior, and cultural humility required for effective practice as a member of interprofessional teams
3	Students will develop and deliver information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations.
4	Students will strategically apply management principles in the provision of nutrition services to individuals and organizations.
5	Students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize the nutrition literature to form evidence-based conclusions
6	Students will demonstrate the advanced knowledge of applied human nutrition.

Internally, the Nutrition Graduate Programs Director, the MS/DI Program Leader, and Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will review student progress, coursework grades, comprehensive examination results, and passing rate on Registration Examination for RDNs on an annual basis. This information will be used to evaluate appropriateness of program coursework and competencies gained through completion of the MS/DI program.

Markers of students' success are tracked, including:

1. Evaluations from supervised practice rotation preceptors
2. Pass rate on RDN exam
3. Job placement
4. Employer satisfaction with graduates' preparedness

A variety of mechanisms for tracking students' perceptions of the program are used, including:

1. Teaching evaluations

2. Unsolicited student feedback
3. Graduate surveys 1 year post-graduation

In addition, we track how effectively the MS/DI program advances students by tracking the following:

1. Program attrition (dropouts, dismissals) and
2. Time to complete the MS/DI program

Externally, the MS/DI program will be subject to review from the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) once every seven years.

V: Financial Aid

This is a professional graduate program and students in the program cannot be supported with graduate assistantships due to the heavy credit load in Year 1 and the number of required clinical training hours required in Year 2.

VI: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

A. Program Faculty

The MS/DI degree is supported by current HBNS faculty. The following HBNS faculty (please see **Table 5**, next page) specialize in Nutrition and have the research and teaching expertise required for implementation and administration of the program.

Table 5: Summary of HBNS Affiliated Faculty Areas of Interest	
Faculty Member	Research Expertise
Sheau Ching Chai, PhD, RD	Diet and nutrient intake in prevention and reduction of age- and nutrition-related diseases; phytochemicals.
Carrie Earthman, PhD, RD	Body composition, energy metabolism and nutrition assessment in chronic and acute illness; clinical nutrition assessment; diagnosis and management of disease-associated malnutrition.
Cheng-Shun (Richard) Fang, PhD, RD	Dietary fiber and diseases, nutritional assessment.
Melissa Melough, PhD, RD	Nutritional and chronic disease epidemiology; maternal and child nutrition; endocrine disruptors and other environmental chemicals.
Carly Pacanowski, PhD RD	Weight and eating disorders in emerging adults; psychological outcomes of interventions to control body weight; health behaviors that prevent eating- and weight-related issues.
Shannon Robson PhD, MPH, RD	Behavioral weight management interventions in pediatric and adult populations; basic feeding studies manipulating diet.
Alisha Rovner, PhD	Public health nutrition, vitamin D, bone mineral metabolism.
Kelebogile Setiloane, PhD	Infant and child feeding practices, Cultural competency, Global health/Nutrition, Immigrant Health/Nutrition.
Jillian Trabulsi, PhD, RD	Early childhood nutrition; diet, nutrition and energy balance in healthy individuals and in those with chronic disease, obesity.

B. MS/DI Program Leader

The Dietetic Internship (DI) Director will oversee the MS/DI Program. The MS/DI Director will serve on the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee, alongside the MSHN program leader and the Director of Nutrition Graduate Programs.

Responsibilities of the MS/DI Leader include:

- 1) Providing leadership and oversight for the program
- 2) Representing the program at faculty and Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee meetings
- 3) Communicating as necessary with the University Graduate College
- 4) Serving as the first point of contact for issues arising with program students and faculty
- 5) Approving all changes in evidence-based project advisors
- 6) Corresponding with prospective students and overseeing program recruitment and admission decisions
- 7) Program evaluation and assessment
- 8) Organizing administration of Comprehensive Examination

- 9) Overseeing all aspects of the Dietetic Internship, including assuring compliance with ACEND accreditation standards

C. Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee

The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will be responsible for the administrative duties across all graduate nutrition programs, including the MS/DI. The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will consist of nutrition graduate faculty members and shall be chaired by the NS PhD Program Director. Responsibilities of the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee shall include (but not limited to):

- 1) Admission of students into the program;
- 2) Approval of student programs of study;
- 3) Approval of student selection of a new faculty advisor after admission to the program;
- 4) Writing and grading written comprehensive examination questions;
- 5) Oversight of student progress in the program, including dismissal of students who fail to make satisfactory progress;
- 6) Approval of dissertation committees; and
- 7) Other tasks required for the continued success of the program.