



PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT
Dietetic Internship (DI) Program
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 minimum of a master's degree, and at least 1,000 hours of supervised practice in an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program.

The Dietetic Internship (DI) program at the University of Delaware is an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program and 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 Dietetic Internship is to provide a comprehensive curriculum 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 Dietetic Internship began enrolling students in 1995. The DI has been continuously accredited by ACEND, with the most recent reaccreditation occurring in 2023.

C. Certificate Offered

Those who complete the program will receive a certificate of completion 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 Graduate Program Committee. Students will be admitted to the program based on enrollment availability, and their ability to meet the following **minimum** entrance requirements:

- 1) A master's degree conferred prior to the start of the dietetic internship program
- 2) Verification of completion of the Didactic Program in Dietetics or an Intent to Complete form from an ACEND-accredited undergraduate program
- 3) Overall GPA of 2.75 or above; GPA of 2.75 or above in professional courses
- 4) Recent relevant work or volunteer experience beyond that required for undergraduate course requirements
- 5) A Medical Nutrition Therapy course completed no more than four years prior to application to the DI

B. Prior Degree Requirements

A completed master'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 DPD Program) is required for admittance to the DI Program.

C. Application Deadlines

All application materials for the DI program must be submitted by January 15th for admission to the program the following summer semester. Students who are currently enrolled in, or who have graduated from the University of Delaware's Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD), MS in Human Nutrition (MSHN) or PhD in Nutrition Sciences are eligible to apply during the Early Action round of admission with a January 8th deadline. The program will offer summer 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 Graduate Program 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 Graduate Program Committee will make final decisions on admission. Admitted students will begin the program in the Second Summer Session. 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 Dietetic Internship program does not provide "conditional" acceptance. The DI is a full-time 7-month program. Graduate Assistantships are not available for this program.

E. Application Documents Required

DI applicants are required to submit an application using DICAS requiring:

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

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 certificate 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 Graduate Program Committee .

III: Graduate Certificate Program: Dietetic Internship

A. Certificate Requirements

The Dietetic Internship Program requires successful completion of 12 credit hours which include 1,000 supervised practice hours. The DI Program is designed to be completed over a 7-month period.

A.1. Coursework and Credit Hours

An outline of the 12 required credit hours is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Outline of DI Program Coursework

Course	# Credits
HBNS 648: Dietetics Practicum I	4
HBNS 649: Dietetics Practicum II	4
HBNS 650: Current Perspectives in Dietetics I	2
HBNS 651: Current Perspectives in Dietetics II	2
TOTAL CREDITS	12

A.2. Planned Program of Study

Students in the DI program must complete the course requirements in the progression outlined in Table 2. Students start the program in the Second Summer Session and complete the program in Winter Session.

Table 2: Program Plan for DI program		
	Summer II/Fall	Winter
Dietetic Internship	HBNS648* (4) HBNS650 (2)	HBNS649* (4) HBNS651 (2)
*Students complete a minimum of 1000 supervised practice hours as part of HBNS648 and 649.		

B. Faculty Mentor

The Program Director serves as the faculty mentor for all enrolled dietetic interns.

C. Timetable and Definition of Satisfactory Progress toward Degree

C.1. Time Limit for Completing the Degree

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 DI Program Director. The maximum time allowed to complete the program is normally 11 months.

C.2. Submission of Required University Forms

To initiate the process for the completion certificate, students must submit a "Completion Application Form for Graduate Certificate" to the Graduate College. The completed form must be submitted by the end of the free Drop/Add period at the beginning of the semester in which the student is registered for the last courses needed to complete the certificate. The application must be signed by the Program Director. Therefore, routing of the Application form must begin at least two weeks prior to the application deadline.

C.3. 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 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.4. 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 DI Program in accordance with Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) accreditation standards for dietetic internship programs as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. DI Program Goals

	Dietetic Internship Program Goals
1	Graduates will earn the Registered Dietitian credential.
2	Graduates will possess the knowledge and skills in medical nutrition therapy, community nutrition, and foodservice management for successful employment in a variety of settings.
3	Graduates will be leaders in the dietetics profession.

Internally, the DI Program Director reviews student progress, preceptor evaluations, grades, and pass/fail rate on coursework. This information is used to evaluate the extent to which students are developing critical competencies in the program.

Markers of students' success will be tracked, including:

- 1) Evaluations from supervised practice rotation preceptors
- 2) Pass rate on the Commission on Dietetic Registration's (CDR) Registration Examination for Dietitians (RD Exam) after program completion

- 3) Job placement rate after program completion
- 4) Evaluations by employers after program completion

In addition, we track how effectively the DI Program advances students by tracking the following:

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

Finally, we use a variety of mechanisms for tracking students' perceptions of the program, including:

- 1) Anonymous student surveys to assess different aspects of the program including: classes, mentoring, preparation for RD exam and employment
- 2) Unsolicited student feedback.

Externally, the DI Program is subject to program review every seven years by ACEND.

V: Financial Aid

This is a graduate certificate program and students in the program cannot be supported with graduate assistantships due to the number of required clinical training hours.

VI: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

A. Program Faculty

The program faculty consists of the Program Director and the Site Supervisor who are full-time faculty in the Department of HBNS.

B. DI Program Director

The Dietetic Internship (DI) Director will oversee the DI Program. The 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 DI Director 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) Corresponding with prospective students and overseeing program recruitment and admission decisions
- 6) Program evaluation and assessment
- 7) Ensuring program's compliance with Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)
- 8) Overseeing all aspects of the Dietetic Internship

C. Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee

The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will consist of the director of each MS, PhD, and/or certificate program, and additional graduate program faculty who are interested in serving. Graduate program faculty consist of any faculty member teaching graduate courses or mentoring graduate students. The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will be chaired by the NS PhD Program Director and is responsible for the administrative duties across all

graduate nutrition programs, including the DI. 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 mentor 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.