

**Master of Health Sciences-
Nutrition Concentration (MHS-ND)
Dietetic Internship Program**

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WCU MHS-ND/Dietetic Internship Program

WCU's Dietetic Internship (DI) Program is included in a 22-month Master of Health Sciences (MHS)- Nutrition (ND) concentration program which begins each Fall semester and is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). ACEND serves the public by establishing and enforcing eligibility requirements and accreditation standards that ensure the quality and continued improvement of nutrition and dietetics education programs. Programs meeting these standards are accredited by ACEND.

Throughout this document the program will be referred to as the Nutrition & Dietetics – Dietetic Internship (ND-DI) Program.

ND-DI Mission Statement

The mission of the Dietetic Internship Program within the MHS-ND concentration at Western Carolina University is to provide a high-quality supervised practicum that prepares entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists and promotes life-long learning, meaningful engagement, and service to the region.

ACEND Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives (measurable outcomes as required and approved by ACEND) for the DI program within the MHS-ND concentration at Western Carolina University are as follows:

Goal 1: *Graduates will become entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists practicing in a variety of settings*

- Objective 1.1: At least 80% of responding employers of dietetic internship program graduates will indicate satisfaction with graduates' preparation for entry-level practice.
- Objective 1.2: At least 80% of program graduates complete program/degree requirements within 36 months (150% of the program length).
- Objective 1.3: 80% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.
- Objective 1.4: 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%.
- Objective 1.5: Of graduates who seek employment, 50% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.

Goal 2:

Verification Statement Requirements

Verification Statement: An original, completed verification form obtained from your

completion may impact a student's ability to complete a rotation, which may impact their grades. Due dates and clear instructions for all requirements will be provided by the Clinical Education Coordinator.

The lab tests and immunization records will be shared by the ND-DI program with supervised practice facility sites that require medical information through the Exxat platform. This is in accordance with university and most supervised practice site policies. Drug testing is required by most practicum facilities.

Professional Liability Insurance

Each ND-DI student must carry professional liability insurance once supervised practice (practicum courses) begins in the program. Professional liability insurance provides malpractice coverage for ND-DI students during the program rotations and didactics trainings. The ND-DI Clinical Education Coordinator submits ND-DI student information annually for the university's Student Blanket Professional Liability Policy. The cost of the coverage is the responsibility of the ND-DI student and is charged through the student's university account.

Medical Insurance

Although not a requirement of WCU distance students, ND-DI students are required to carry medical insurance once supervised practice (practicum courses) begins in the program. ND-DI students may select their insurance plans and coverage, and acquiring and maintaining insurance is the responsibility of the ND-DI student. The ND-DI student must submit a copy of medical insurance coverage in Exxat by the last day of the first Spring semester. Should an ND-DI student be injured or ill at WCU or at a supervised practice facility rotation, the ND-DI student's medical coverage would take effect to cover costs.

Criminal Background Checks

All ND-DI students who plan to enroll in practicum courses are required to complete criminal background checks. Students who might be af(m)-3 (j)2 (s)14 11.9 (i)6 (c)4 (um)-o36.9 (ac)4(D

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the student should follow the [Academic Action Appeal Policy](#) available in the WCU Graduate Catalog.

If the complaint is against the ND-DI program specifically as it relates to ACEND® accreditation standards, policies, and/or procedures, the student should discuss the complaint with the ND-DI Program Director. If the complaint directly involves the ND-DI Program Director or satisfactory resolution is unable to be sought through the ND-DI Program Director, the student should discuss the complaint with the School Director. A written complaint should be completed for purposes of documentation. The written complaint should include:

Student name and contact information (address, phone number, email

Financial, visa, or flight-booking complications will not be approved either. Each individual's situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The ND-DI Program Director must approve the request to delay admission. A deferral may be requested for up to one year. A longer delay of admission may be granted to a student whose United States military commitment has been extended for more than 1 year. A delay can be requested only for the same ND-DI program to which the student was admitted.

Admitted students must notify the ND-DI Program Director of a stop out request as soon as the admitted student knows that a delay of admission will be needed. The request must be made no later than 1 month prior to the beginning of the term to which the student has been admitted. Exceptions may be made in the event of an emergency.

Assessment of Student Learning

Dietetic Intern Evaluations

ND-DI students will be given verbal and written evaluation on a regular, ongoing basis throughout the program. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with all evaluation guidelines and forms including the criteria and timing for each evaluation. Evaluations are to be completed by the specified dates. Each practicum will require a mid-point and final evaluation. The lead site preceptor completes the Intern Evaluation Form and discusses the evaluation with the student. The intern, preceptor and ND-DI Program Director sign the evaluation form. The ND-DI Program Director provides the appropriate evaluation forms to the preceptor, specifies the dates for evaluation, reviews completed evaluations, and maintains all evaluations in the Intern's file. Additionally, the ND-DI student completes self-evaluations regularly throughout the program. For program feedback, ND-DI students complete an evaluation following each practicum for each supervised practice site. An exit interview in the form of a survey

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Director at the conclusion of EACH practicum. These will be collected in both the LMS (Canvas) and Exxat platforms.

Roles and Responsibilities of ND-DI students, Supervised Practice Preceptors, and ND-DI Program Director

ND-DI students (dietetic intern) Roles and Responsibilities

ND-DI students will acquire the skills and knowledge to function as an entry-level dietitian or manager in all areas of dietetics. Failure to follow these rules might result in termination from the program.

Be professional in manner and appearance at all times.

Represent Western Carolina University in an appropriate manner and appearance when visiting affiliations, class days and field observations.

Be punctual and available throughout the practicum rotations.

Complete objectives, learning experiences, reading assignments, and projects by due dates.

Be prepared for each rotation by reading required texts and articles and by completing worksheets prior to or during each rotation.

Follow WCU, School of Health Science, including ND and MHS, and supervised practice site policies and procedures.

Maintain confidentiality of all information discussed within the hospital and department.

Ask for the preceptor's approval to leave his/her area of responsibility.

Communicate to the practicum instructor when attending meetings or conferences out of the building.

Inform the preceptor of any change in his/her schedule in a timely manner.

Accept any change in the preceptor's schedule that may arise.

Maintain respect for positions of authority and follow chain of command.

Function as a team player.

Seek guidance when needed.

Research and look up information, as needed.

Accept constructive criticism.

Completely accept responsibility for all actions.

Maintain a positive and hard-working attitude.

Maintain open and frequent communication with staff.

Attend all required conferences, meetings, and classes.

Maintain student assignments, forms, projects, etc. in appropriate files.

See additional link on WCU ND-DI website for a complete list of Core Competencies for the Registered Dietitian (CRDN). These competencies are established by ACEND for all accredited dietetic internship programs. Achievement of the competencies is measured throughout the dietetic internship program and must be successfully met to obtain a DI verification statement.

Program Costs and Fees

MHS-ND Program Expenses

Tuition rates are reviewed and set annually by the North Carolina legislature. The University reserves the right to alter any charges without prior notice. Graduate distance learning tuition and fees per credit hour for in-state and out-of-state rates can be found on the [Tuition & Fees](#) website.

The below table lists some examples of costs to expect during the ND-DI program. The below table includes estimations and may change without prior notice.

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Student Membership (note: this is a significant discount compared to the professional rate)	\$58.00
Textbooks and Supplies	\$400.00 per year approximately
Exxat	\$136.00
Professional Liability Insurance (paid as student fee)	\$25.00
Criminal Background Check	\$40.00-60.00
Drug Screen	varies
Health Insurance	varies
Immunizations	(max if not covered by Ins.) varies
Rent, Food, and Gas	Varies per site, preference and commute
In-State Tuition	Fall 2024-Spring 2025 In-State Graduate Tuition & Fees is \$5,330.40.*
Out of State Tuition	Fall 2024-Spring 2025 Out-of-State Tuition & Fees is \$10,689.90. *

**Proposed rates are subject to change until they are approved by the UNC Board of Governors, reviewed and authorized by the state legislature, and signed into the state budget as law by the Governor.*

Unprofessional or unethical conduct or violating the policies of the internship as set forth in the student handbook

Two rotation failures

Failure to pass drug screen or background check or evidence of drug or alcohol abuse

Performing as an RDN outside the confines of the ND-DI Program

Falsification of records

The process for review of improper conduct is as follows:

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Vacation and Sick Leave

Absence Due to Illness or Injury

ND-DI students are allowed excused absences due to illness or injury during supervised practice practicum rotations. An absence of more than one day due to illness or injury may require a note from the physician. At the discretion of the preceptor, and ND-DI Clinical Education Coordinator, supervised practice hours lost to illness or injury may need to be made up. If the ND-DI student is out due to illness or injury, he/she should notify the site preceptor and ND-DI Clinical Education Coordinator for each day of absence. The illness or injury is documented and placed in the ND-DI student's file. The ND-DI student records their absence on the Dietetic Internship Weekly Competency Log. If illness or injury interrupts a rotation for a definite period of time, the ND-DI Program Director will negotiate an appropriate leave for the intern. The leave must not extend the interns program completion date past 150% of the program length.

Absence for Bereavement

The intern is excused for supervised practice days when there is a death of their immediate family (partner, child, brother, sister, mother, father, grandparent, grandchild, stepchild, or partner's parent). The ND-DI Clinical Education Coordinator reserves the right to request valid proof of death and relationship of immediate family member. Any request for additional days of absence is approved by the ND-DI Program Director as Absences for Personal Reasons. The ND-DI student is to immediately contact the site preceptor and ND-DI Clinical Education Coordinator when there is a death of an immediate family member. Supervised practice hours missed for bereavement must be made up if the intern will drop below the required hours of supervised practice.

Absence for Personal Reasons

ND-DI students can request an absence to be excused due to personal reasons. Approval is left to the discretion of the ND-DI Clinical Education Coordinator and ND-DI Program Director. The intern is required to make up the lost internship time due to personal reasons.

Vacation and Holiday

ND-DI students are allowed to observe the holidays observed by the university while in non-practicum courses, and holidays observed by the supervised practice site while in practicum courses; ND-DI students may choose to take vacation during these times. ND-DI students may be expected to complete supervised practice hours during WCU breaks. At the beginning of the program, the ND-DI Program Director informs ND-DI students of the scheduled weeks of vacation and holidays.

Inclement Weather

ND-DI students are expected to attend supervised practice rotations at facilities as scheduled. In the event of inclement weather (e.g. snow or ice) during practicum placement, ND-DI students should communicate with their preceptors regarding facility

Accessibility Resources. Please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, 135 Killian Annex (next to One Stop), (828) 227-3886 or by email at accessibility@wcu.edu.

own in any academic exercise.

Self-plagiarism- reusing work that you have already published or submitted for a class. It can involve re-submitting an entire paper, copying, paraphrasing passages from your previous work, or recycling old data.

Facilitation of academic dishonesty: helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any