



UTHealth Houston Dietetic Internship Student Handbook & Program Guide

July 2026

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PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION:

The philosophy and mission of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health Dietetic Internship Program (UTHEALTH HOUSTON DI) is to educate and train graduates to be competent, entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists in the field of nutrition and dietetics using current nutritional sciences research and evidenced-based practices and employing technological innovations to prepare them to improve the nutritional status of various populations in multiple settings.

PROGRAM GOALS:

The Program Goals and Outcome Measures for the Dietetic Internship (DI) are in concert with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) 2022 Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards, the UTHSC, and the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Goals. They are as follows:

Goal 1

Program graduates will become professional entry-level dietitians through comprehensive scientific research-focused education and experiences. The UTHEALTH HOUSTON DI Program will meet the required competency statements of entry-level dietetic education programs for the supervised practice component in public health/community, foodservice/management and medical nutrition therapy dietetics practice.

Objectives

- a. Program Completion: At least 80% of the program students will complete program/degree requirements within 33 months (150% of the program length).
- b. Graduate Employment: Of graduates who seek employment, 80% will be employed in Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics or a related field within 12 months of graduation.
- c. Graduate Performance on Registration Exam:
 1. 80% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.
 2. The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration within one year of first attempt) on CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.
- d. Employer Satisfaction: 80% of the Employers returning the Employer Graduate Survey will state that they would hire another graduate from this DI Program.
- e. 90% of the graduates will complete their Competencies/Learning Outcomes for Entry-Level Dietitians as evidenced by scores of 2-3 on evaluations by preceptors and DI program faculty.

Goal 2:

The UTHealth HOUSTON DI Program will provide opportunities for graduates to develop professional attitudes and skills with an understanding of and commitment to ethical practices consistent with the emerging needs of the dietetic professional.

Objectives:

- a. At least 90% of the UTHealth Houston graduates (who respond to the survey) will state yes through Student Evaluations that their supervised practice experience helped develop competency as an entry-level dietitian nutritionist.
- b. At least 90% of UTHealth Houston graduates (who respond to the survey) will rate learning activities as strongly agree or agree regarding preparing the intern for professional practice as an entry-level dietitian nutritionist.
- c. At least 90% of UTHealth Houston students will achieve Excellent – Satisfactory scores for all Supervised Practice Rotation Completion scores on knowledge base, communication skills, timeliness, interpersonal skills, dependability, and attitude as evaluated by Supervising Practice Preceptors.
- d. At least 80% of the employers returning the Employer UTHealth HOUSTON DI Graduate Survey will rate graduates as good or excellent at understanding patient care from nutritional sciences and population health perspectives.
- e. At least 90% of UTHealth Houston students will score 90 or above on an ethics quiz administered during their last semester.

Additional Objectives:

- a. 90% of the graduates will complete their Competencies/Learning Outcomes for Entry-Level Dietitians as evidenced by scores of 2-3 on evaluations by preceptors and DI program faculty.
- b. At least 80% of the employers returning the Employer DI Program Graduate Survey will rate graduates as good-excellent on performing at a high ethical standard in professional practice.

PROGRAM COMPLETION AND GRADUATION

Completion of the Dietetic Internship will require the following:

1. Successful completion of all planned experiences to meet each core competency.
2. Successful completion of all program rotations with satisfactory evaluations for each rotation.
3. A minimum of 1,000 clock hours in supervised practice facilities for the achievement of performance requirements for entry-level dietitians. See details as to how total hours are obtained in Appendix A.
4. Required coursework needed for completion of DI program:
 - PH 5040L Nutrition Research Methods
 - PH 1232L – Public Health Nutrition Practice
 - PH 5032 - 850 Culinary Medicine

- PH 9997 – Section 800 (PPC1) Practicum Dietetic Internship Supervised Practice
 - PH 5030 Diabetes Seminar
 - PHM 1496 – Integrative Learning Experience
 - PH 5031 Garden for Health
 - PH 1231L Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT)
 - PHM 1229 Medical Nutrition Therapy Simulation Lab
 - PH 9997 Section 850 – (PPC2) Continuum Clinical Nutrition Practicum
5. Recommendations by faculty and staff in supervised practice settings that the student has successfully mastered the core competencies necessary for the achievement of the performance requirements for entry-level dietitians. Achievement will be determined by various evaluation methods, both formative and summative.

After satisfactory completion of the required supervised practice experiences, the Program Director will provide the Dietetic Intern with a copy of the Verification Statement indicating completion of the UTHSC Dietetic Internship. The Program Director will complete the necessary administrative work to notify the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) of the intern's status (<https://www.cdrnet.org/>). The intern will then complete the necessary paperwork to register for the Registration Examination for Dietitians and take the examination. The Program Director requests that each intern make arrangements to take the Registration Exam as soon after completion of the DI Program as feasible and report the outcome of the exam results upon completion. The Program Director will also provide the Dietetic Intern with information on becoming a Licensed Dietitian in the State of Texas.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

UTHSC Dietetic Internship has been awarded Accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) through June 30, 2030.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Health and Malpractice Insurance

All students registering at UTHealth Houston are required to complete a medical history form and to complete an immunization record and statement of health status signed by a physician. Hepatitis B and Measles vaccinations are required as well as a current TB test (<https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/student-information/required-immunizations.htm>.) A copy of your immunization record must be on file with the Program Director before being placed in a Supervised Practice facility. You may be requested to provide a copy of your record to the facilities as well. This is an accreditation matter of great importance. Some clinical rotations require a drug screen and it is the responsibility of the Dietetic Intern to complete this within the required time frame prior to beginning a rotation at that Supervised Practice facility and to pay for the expense of the drug screen.

All Dietetic Interns are required to carry personal health insurance and show proof of coverage prior to the start of the supervised practice experience each year. See the UTHealth Houston Auxiliary Services website

regarding available student health insurance (<https://www.uth.edu/auxiliary-enterprises/insurance/index.htm>). Some Supervised Practice facilities may request a copy of proof of medical insurance coverage. Professional liability insurance coverage is required of each Dietetic Intern enrolled in the program. The fees for professional liability insurance are automatically charged by the Registrar's Office as follows:

Tuition & Fee Schedule - Registration - Current Students - UTHealth Houston	Fall - \$5.25 Spring - \$5.25 Summer - \$4.00
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Registration Status

Each Dietetic Intern must be enrolled as at least part-time through UTSPH during their Supervised Practice Experience in order to be covered by the university's malpractice insurance. The Dietetic Intern must ensure tuition is paid, as well as their professional liability insurance fees.

The Supervised Practice facility may request a copy of the Dietetic Intern's fee bill as proof of payment for the professional liability insurance.

Official Undergraduate Transcripts and DPD Verification Statement

Each Dietetic Intern must have an official transcript sent to the Dietetic Internship Director from their undergraduate institution that states their degree and the date the degree was granted on the transcript. The Dietetic Intern must also submit their Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) Verification Statement to the DI Director before beginning their Supervised Practice Rotations.

Dietetic Specific Program Costs

The following costs are subject to change.

Application Fee	\$25.00
Dietetic Internship Fee	\$7,000.00 (half payable each spring semester of \$3,500 each year)
DI Textbooks, Lab coats, Supplies:	\$500.00
Student AND Membership	\$58.00
Specific Supervised Practice Requirements	Variable (i.e. CBC, Drug Testing, CPR, Reliable transportation, travel, meals while in rotations, gas & parking)

Tuition and Fees for the School of Public Health can be found here:

<https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/registration/tuition-fee-schedule.htm>

Financial Aid, Withdrawal and Refund of tuition and Fees and other related information: See UTHealth Houston Registrar website at: <https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/index.htm>

ACCESS TO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The Student Affairs Office is conveniently located on the second floor of the RAS building at UTSPH. Every Dietetic Intern when admitted to the UTHealth Houston DI Program is required to attend new student orientation conducted by the Office of Student Affairs the week prior to each semester. The Student Support Services website provides information for all students such as housing and transportation, the student health clinic, recreation, child care, scholarships, etc. at: <https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/student-information/student-services.htm>

ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS, INJURY, OR TARDINESS

Illness or Injury and Health Insurance Responsibility

The Internship Director and your preceptors in supervised practice settings should be contacted when you are ill, injured, or absent from your supervised practice rotation. Any injury or exposure to communicable diseases should be reported to the Internship Director immediately, and they will assist you in completing an "Incident Report" to be filed with UTHealth Houston. If the Dietetic Intern is injured in any facility, then that facility will assist the intern in obtaining immediate medical attention as may be required. The Dietetic Intern's health insurance will be used to pay for the medical treatment if required. The facility does not assume any liability or responsibility for the health or custodial care costs of the intern. The Dietetic Intern is not covered under Worker's Compensation Insurance, since in their role as a Dietetic Intern, they are not employees of UTHealth Houston.

Work Schedule Approval or Changes for Supervised Practice and Tardiness

It is the Dietetic Intern's responsibility to complete an approved work schedule with the primary preceptor at the initiation of supervised practice rotation. Make sure that the preceptor knows when you will be attending class. Any changes in your work schedule should be confirmed with the preceptor at least a week prior. The work schedule at the facility should be viewed as official work time. The rotation should be treated as a job, and the Dietetic Intern is expected to work the same hours as the preceptor at the facility (see Appendix A for expected hours for each Supervised Practice rotation). The preceptors who train you may provide future recommendations when you are applying for a professional position as a dietitian. Keep track of all direct and indirect work hours for the preceptor to sign on a weekly basis. (Direct hours are those working at the facility; indirect hours are those worked outside of the facility but related to projects you have been assigned, for example, the development of a training program for employees or updating a patient education booklet). Dietetic interns will not replace any paid employees in the facility nor will any funds be exchanged between the University and the facility.

Excessive tardiness to Supervised Practice sites may be grounds for termination from the rotation. Attendance policies for the Supervised Practice site should be reviewed with your preceptor. Any Dietetic Intern unable to perform in a facility is expected to contact the preceptor and the Dietetic Internship Director for each absence day (have someone contact on your behalf if you are too ill). It is recommended if you leave a voice message and also send an e-mail with information as to how to best contact you. Please follow the directions of the preceptor for communicating any absence or tardy occurrence. An absence is considered unscheduled if the preceptor and the Dietetic Internship Director are not contacted in a documented fashion. Medical documentation of your illness is necessary for an absence of 3 or more consecutive days and may be requested for excessive or patterned absences.

It is the Dietetic Intern's responsibility to arrange to make up missed Supervised Practice experiences. The make-up time must be scheduled at the convenience of the facility and within the time frame set by the Internship Director. Greater than 2-day absences in the same week will require repeating an entire week of supervised practice if feasible for the facility.

Withdrawal from Supervised Practice Rotation or DI Program due to Illness

If a Dietetic Intern's supervised practice experience must be rescheduled for medically documented reasons, the Dietetic Intern shall complete the rotation as soon as possible within the next semester at the discretion of the facility. The submission of appropriate paperwork will follow the same time schedule intervals for performance review once the make-up period begins. A Dietetic Intern not completing a clinical rotation during the semester scheduled will receive an Incomplete for PH9997 (PPC). Incompletes must be completed the following semester or the grade reverts to an F. More than one (1) unexcused absence or tardiness during a supervised practice rotation will result in academic disciplinary action up to and including removal from the Dietetic Internship. If a Dietetic Intern must drop out of the DI Program due to an illness or unforeseen circumstances, completion of the DI Program is dependent upon approval by the DI faculty and if within 150% of the 22-month program if adequate Supervised Practice rotation sites are available.

PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Dietetic Interns are encouraged to actively support national and local nutrition organizations and are required to become an Associate or Student Member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and Southeast Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Attendance at local dietetic meetings and events is strongly encouraged. Other professional meetings deemed valuable to the learning experiences will be required. Student organizations in the School of Public Health are also available. Dietetic Interns are given the opportunity to volunteer for various community nutrition projects throughout the year. Participation in at least one such event per year is required. All

volunteer hours must be approved by the Dietetic Internship Director prior to the event. (See Appendix A for required Supervised Practice hours).

DIETETIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM CALENDAR

The supervised practice experience of the Dietetic Internship typically occurs during two spring semesters and the summer in between the 2-year DI Program. If a holiday is recognized by the facility in which a Dietetic Intern is placed, then the Dietetic Intern may observe the holiday with the approval of the Dietetic Internship Program Director. Assignments may be given to the Dietetic Intern for outside work during this time.

HOLIDAYS, VACATIONS, ABSENCES, RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

- School and class holidays are designated by UTHealth Houston. See the Registrar's website for the UTSPH academic calendar <https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/student-information/academic-calendar.htm>.
- Depending on the schedules of facilities, Dietetic Interns in the program may be required to work on a university holiday and some weekends.
- In the event that an excused absence is requested and approved at other times, the Dietetic Internship Director and the supervised practice preceptor will determine the make-up time. Any absences are expected to be for a justifiable cause that is reported in advance to the Dietetic Internship Director and the Supervised Practice preceptor.
- The observance of religious holidays, other than those designated by the State of Texas, must be approved in advance by the Dietetic Internship Director and Supervised Practice preceptor. Arrangements to complete assignments and/or examinations must be made in advance.
- The UTSPH academic calendar should not be considered the calendar for the Dietetic Internship. In addition to scheduled clinical experience hours, Dietetic Interns are required to attend all scheduled PPC and orientation sessions as part of their practicum requirements.
- There are required training sessions during the winter and summer breaks. Plan to be available during orientation week (1 week prior to the start of the spring semester), and during June/July for the diabetes PPC lecture series as well as the mandatory health worker training sessions held by the Diabetes Camps. Second-year interns will have simulation orientation during the month of August prior to their second year. Also, any missed clinical hours will be made up during Spring Break or during the Summer Semester.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Student performance is evaluated through examinations and instructor feedback in didactic courses. A final grade of 80% or greater in each required nutrition/dietetic course (PH5040L, PH1232L, PH5032, PH9997-800, PH5030, PH1496, PH5031, PH1231L, PHM1229, PH9997-850) is required to progress to the subsequent supervised practice rotations. Performance in supervised practice rotations is

evaluated during each rotation and at the end of the rotation in both informal and formal ways. At the end of each semester, an overall evaluation by the Internship Director, faculty, and staff is conducted with the student. Achievement of specified Supervised Practice Competencies is expected by each Dietetic Intern graduating from the UT Health Science Center – Houston Dietetic Internship. If a Dietetic Intern fails more than one rotation, his/her status in the internship will be reevaluated by the Internship Director and Internship admissions committee. Any failed supervised practice rotation must be made up before the intern can progress to the next rotation.

SUPERVISED PRACTICE EVALUATION

The following scoring template is provided on the Competency Evaluation Form for all Supervised Practice (SP) Preceptors.

3	Outstanding performance; based upon progress and response to feedback within current rotation.
2	Good performance; based upon progress and response to feedback within current rotation.
1*	Needs improvement; should be exhibiting more skills at this point in current rotation.
0**	Unacceptable performance.
N/A	N/A No opportunity to observe or accomplish during this rotation.

*Requires action plan and documentation prior to start of next rotation.

**Please contact program director immediately. May require review by DI committee and repeat of rotation components.

If less than a score of 2 is made on any competency, an action plan with documentation for completion prior to the next Supervised Practice rotation must be submitted to the DI Director. A preceptor must evaluate the intern with a minimum of 2 for every competency in order to complete all Supervised Practice rotations. The Dietetic Intern will have one opportunity to improve their grade to achieve competency in each supervised practice rotation. If after one opportunity the Dietetic Intern does not achieve competency, then they will be required to withdraw from the supervised practice rotation. More than one unexcused absence or tardiness during a supervised practice rotation may result in the intern's removal from the Dietetic Internship. Proper communications and reliability are necessary professional skills and requirements for completing the Dietetic Internship.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

It is the Dietetic Intern's responsibility to learn the institutional and departmental mission statements as well as expected professional behavior. The Dietetic Intern should take a proactive attitude and consider all training as preparing them for their future as a professional dietitian. The Dietetic Intern should accept all constructive criticism during professional evaluations as important feedback in order to grow professionally. If a UTHealth Houston Dietetic Intern performs in an unprofessional or

unethical manner or commits a serious medical malpractice error, the facility by agreement has a right to refuse the Dietetic Intern continued placement at their facility. If this should happen, the UTHealth Houston Dietetic Internship Director and/or Assistant Director will meet with the facility, and the Dietetic Intern, and determine the next course of action as well as the future status of the dietetic intern in the Program. Options might include being placed in another facility, receiving an incomplete in the semester supervised practice course with additional coursework required, or withdrawing from the Dietetic Internship.

Professional Appearance & Grooming

Interns are expected to maintain a professional appearance that reflects the standards of healthcare, community, and educational settings.

Personal Hygiene

- Maintain good personal hygiene, including regular bathing to prevent strong, disruptive or offensive odors, and clean, well-maintained clothing.
- Clothing should be clean, neat, and pressed when appropriate, and in good repair.
- Avoid excessive makeup, heavy perfumes, colognes, or other strong scents that may cause discomfort to patients, clients, colleagues, or community members.

Hair & Grooming

- Hair, including facial hair, must be clean, well-groomed, and styled.
- Hair must be secured when required for foodservice, laboratory, kitchen, or clinical activities.
- Facial hair coverings may be required in accordance with site infection control, food safety, or personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements.
- Hairstyles and hair colors should support a professional appearance and comply with site-specific policies.

Nails

- Fingernails must be clean, neatly maintained, and of a reasonable length.
- Artificial nail enhancements, including acrylic nails, tips, wraps, appliqués, or similar products, are prohibited in settings where food safety, infection control, or site policies restrict their use.
- Nail polish must comply with facility policies.

Jewelry, Tattoos, & Piercings

- Jewelry should be minimal and consistent with site safety and infection control requirements.
- Visible tattoos and piercings must comply with the policies of the assigned practicum, clinical, community, or employment site. Interns are expected to follow any site-specific requirements regarding the coverage of tattoos or removal of jewelry and piercings.

Additional Practicum & Clinical Expectations

- Scrubs may only be worn when permitted by the assigned facility and must be the color designated by the site.
- Closed-toe shoes are required, and non-slip footwear may be required in certain areas.
- The UTHealth Houston identification badge must be worn at all practicums, clinical, community, and field experience sites unless otherwise directed.

- Interns are responsible for obtaining and adhering to the dress code requirements of each assigned practicum or clinical facility before the first day of the rotation.

1. In-Person & Online Class Dress Code

A. In-Person Learning (Lectures, Workshops, Simulation Labs)

Interns are expected to maintain a **business casual, professional appearance**.

Approved Attire

- Collared shirts, button-down shirts, polos, sweaters, blouses, professional tops, university branded t-shirts and other professional clothing suitable for an academic setting
- Slacks, chinos, khakis, non-distressed denim (e.g., no holes), or modest-length skirts, dresses, or shorts
- Closed-toe shoes required in kitchen and simulation settings.
- Clean, neat clothing

Not Permitted

- Athletic wear or sweatpants (see garden section for approved athletic wear)
- Leggings, spandex, short shorts
- Ripped, distressed, or excessively tight clothing
- Crop tops or revealing attire clothing with inappropriate language or graphics

Grooming & Accessories

- Clean, well-maintained appearance
- Minimal fragrance (clinical sensitivity consideration)
- Hair secured when working in labs or food environments
- Jewelry kept minimal for safety, especially in kitchen settings

B. Online/Virtual Learning

Interns should maintain a professional appearance.

Expectations

- Business casual appearance
- Appropriate tops (no sleepwear or gym wear)
- Camera must be on with a blurred or use an appropriate background
- Look for [UTHealth Houston Brand Standards](#), try [this link](#) or visit https://uth.photoshelter.com/galleries/invited_galleries/G000061pyH7sv6go/Virtual-Background
- Minimal distractions

2. Teaching Kitchen Dress Code

The teaching kitchen requires attire that prioritizes food safety, hygiene, and burn prevention.

Required Attire

- Closed-toe, non-slip shoes (mandatory)
- Long pants or skirts (no shorts or short skirts)
- Fitted or appropriately tailored tops (no loose sleeves or sleeveless)
- Hair restraints (hair tie or hair net if required) and beard covers
- Short, clean nails (no artificial nails)

Not Permitted

- Sandals or open-toe shoes
- Loose, flowing clothing
- Strong perfumes or fragrances
- Long unsecured hair
- False eyelashes or other cosmetic accessories that may become detached (e.g. pimple patches, glitter, etc.)
- Artificial nails
- Dangling jewelry

Safety Rationale

For food safety and sanitation purposes, artificial nails, nail enhancements (including acrylic, gel, dip, and press-on nails) are not permitted in the teaching kitchen. Appropriate kitchen attire reduces risk for burns, slips, and contamination in alignment with food safety standards.

3. Gardening Dress Code

Gardening attire must prioritize comfort, durability, and protection from sun exposure and injury. Students are strongly encouraged to wear lightweight, breathable clothing that provides sun protection during gardening activities. UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) rated clothing, including long-sleeved shirts, pants, and hats, is recommended to help reduce sun exposure and protect against harmful UV rays while working outdoors.

Required Attire

- Closed-toe shoes or durable garden clogs/boots
- Comfortable, durable tops (preferably breathable fabrics)
- Shorts may be worn for gardening activities but must be of appropriate length, not excessively short or tight-fitting. Students are expected to dress in a manner that is safe, professional, and suitable for outdoor work.

Recommended Protective Gear

- Wide-brim hat for sun protection
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Long sleeves or protective arm sleeves for sun and scratch protection.

Additional Considerations

- Clothing should be durable, breathable, and able to get soiled

- Sunscreen encouraged for prolonged outdoor work
- Students are encouraged to apply insect repellent before participating in outdoor gardening activities to help protect against mosquitoes. Dress appropriately for weather conditions

Weather and Rain Policy:

Gardening activities will not be conducted during severe weather or heavy rainfall. However, activities may continue during light rain or drizzle. Students should come prepared with a hooded raincoat, poncho or waterproof jacket, as umbrellas are not permitted due to safety concerns and the need to keep both hands free while working in the garden. Appropriate footwear with good traction is also recommended for wet conditions.

Not Permitted

- Open-toe shoes or sandals
- Clothing that restricts movement
- Items that could easily snag on tools or plants
- Short and skin-tight shorts or leggings (working in a highly visible area and must present professionally amongst nearby faculty, staff, and students)

Practicum & Clinical Rotation Dress Code

The practicum and clinical environment requires attire that reflects professional healthcare standards while meeting site-specific safety, infection control, and organizational requirements.

Required Attire

Interns may wear:

- **Business casual professional attire** (no jeans or t-shirts), including:
 - Dress slacks, khakis, or professional skirts
 - Blouses, collared shirts, or professional tops
 - Closed-toe professional shoes
- **Facility-approved scrubs** in the color designated by the practicum, clinical, or community site
- Official identification badge and any site-required identification

Not Permitted

- T-shirts (except when specifically authorized by the rotation site for special events or community outreach activities)
- Leggings worn as pants
- Athletic wear or sweatpants, or athleisure wear
- Ripped, distressed, or excessively tight clothing
- Open-toe shoes, sandals, or flip-flops
- Clothing with inappropriate language, graphics, or logos

Grooming & Infection Control Expectations

- Maintain a clean, professional appearance.
- Follow all site-specific infection prevention and safety requirements.
- Hair must be neat and secured when required by the facility.

- Fragrances should be minimized due to patient and staff sensitivities.
- Jewelry should be minimal and consistent with facility policies.
- Artificial nails and nail polish must comply with site requirements.
- Visible tattoos and piercings must comply with the policies and professional standards of the assigned rotation, practicum, or employment site. Interns are expected to adhere to any site-specific requirements regarding the coverage of tattoos and removal of jewelry.

Site-Specific Requirements

Many practicum and clinical sites have additional dress code standards. Interns are responsible for learning and adhering to all site-specific expectations, including:

- Required scrub colors
- Laboratory coat requirements
- Identification badge placement
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Infection control and patient safety procedures

Professional Rationale

Professional attire promotes credibility, patient confidence, safety, and respect for healthcare environments. Compliance with site dress code policies demonstrates professionalism and readiness for practice as a future Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).

Compliance Expectations

- Interns must follow dress code requirements specific to the learning environment.
- Practicum, clinical, community, and foodservice site-specific dress codes must be followed in addition to this policy.
- Non-compliance may result in removal from the activity, inability to participate in the rotation experience, or required remediation.

Summary Principle

Dress for professionalism, safety, and respect for the environment you are in, whether clinical, practicum, educational, culinary, community-based, or horticultural. As representatives of the institution, students are expected to maintain a professional appearance that reflects positively on themselves, the program, and the University while interacting with faculty, peers, community members, patients, and partner organizations

CELL PHONE POLICY

Cellular telephones are suggested, but must be turned off, on silent or on vibrate, during class or Supervised Practice experience. This is a professional courtesy. Ask your preceptor what their policies are relating to mobile phones. There should be no texting during work hours. Phone calls and/or text messages should only be received during work hours for emergency purposes or as approved by your preceptor. Do not make phone calls, text or play games on your phone during class or during your supervised practice rotations unless you are on a lunch break or there is a family emergency. **DO NOT USE YOUR PHONE TO DO RESEARCH. IT LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE NOT WORKING. DO NOT MAKE PERSONAL CALLS OR TEXT DURING WORKING HOURS UNLESS YOU ARE RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY. IF THAT IS THE CASE, ADVISE YOUR PRECEPTOR.**

SUPERVISED PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS

Professional behavior is extremely important as one completes rotations at Supervised Practice facilities. You are a critical link to the continued success of the DI Program. Dietetic Interns will be representing UTHHealth Houston at all times. One must endeavor to treat patients, students, employees, administrators, faculty and all other individuals with respect and courtesy. With regard to patients and clients, remember the ethical practice of our profession as follows:

- Patient charts or medical records are privileged information. Dietetic Interns may interpret diet information to the patient, but relaying any other information should be left to the discretion of the patient's physician. Patient charts and all other patient records should be kept out of reach from unauthorized persons. Patient charts cannot be photocopied. (Review HIPAA prior to Supervised Practice rotations).
- Do not discuss matters pertaining to patients in public places such as elevators, corridors, or lounge areas.
- When placed in a facility, follow any additional facility-specific policies concerning patient/client rights.
- All contact with patients is done only under the supervision of a designated UTSPH instructor or the Supervised Practice preceptor when the Dietetic Intern is placed in a supervised practice setting.
- No proprietary materials are to be used or removed from a facility without the consent of the Supervised Practice preceptor.
- Any documents presented in class or electronically submitted for assignments must have all patient identifiers removed.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF INTERNS

- Completing all UTSPH requirements for newly admitted students upon admission (<https://sph.uth.edu/new-students/#TID-e0cbad69-3a05-4a60-ab3a-3210158b97b5-2> – See Checklist) including a Criminal Background Check (<https://www.uth.edu/registrar/applicants/criminal-background-check>) at the student's expense.
- Providing original copies of DPD Verification statement signed by DPD Director, an official stamped transcript showing undergraduate degree, and current immunization record signed by health practitioner. Immunizations must meet the UTHHealth Houston requirements and remain current during Supervised Practice rotations. A copy of immunization record may be required by supervised practice facilities.
- Personal automobile insurance and transportation to Supervised Practice facilities (includes gas and parking)
- Meals at Supervised Practice facilities.
- Following all policies, procedures and regulations of Supervised Practice facilities.

- Completing any pre-requisite application paperwork, drug screen, criminal background check, or orientation sessions required by assigned Supervised Practice facilities according to their deadlines for completion and at the intern's expense.
- Reporting on time and following the assigned time schedule. Dietetic Interns may not leave assigned facility areas during Supervised Practice scheduled time without permission of the Supervised Practice faculty. Failure to notify the preceptor will result in the loss of Supervised Practice hours for that day and possible suspension from the rotation.
- Contacting the Supervised Practice preceptor and the UT Health Science Center – Houston DI Director / Asst. Director if an emergency arises. Since this program is very intensive, it is strongly recommended that absenteeism occur only in an emergency.
- Completing assignments on time. This includes evaluations and activity reports. The Dietetic Intern will be advised by faculty of each course as to assignments, requirements and evaluations.
- Keeping a log of hours spent in facilities and/or completing assignments for Supervised Practice. These logs will be checked by faculty at specified times. Many facilities require Dietetic Interns to log their patient contact hours. This should be completed daily. The logs will serve as a reminder to the Dietetic Intern of the projects and competencies completed.
- Covering the costs (through personal health insurance or personal funds) of any emergency health care delivered at a facility.
- Following the academic scholastic honesty policies and code of conduct for students of the School of Public Health on all homework assignments, papers, or other work submitted.
- Continuous enrollment as a Full-Time graduate student while enrolled in the Dietetic Internship during Fall and Spring semesters and at least as a Part-Time student during the Summer semester.
- Paying the Dietetic Internship fee for the semester prior to the first day in a facility for the supervised practice rotation.
- Providing proof of health insurance to the Director of the Dietetic Internship prior to beginning supervised practice experience. This proof will be placed in your intern file maintained by the Dietetic Internship Program Director. A copy might be requested by one of your supervised practice facilities. Please furnish them upon request.

HANDLING OF CONCERNS BY DIETETIC INTERNS

If the Dietetic Intern has any questions related to the issues addressed in the Dietetic Intern Handbook, they should first address them with the Dietetic Internship Program Director, and Co-Director or Assistant Director of the Dietetic Internship. If they are unable to resolve their issues or concerns, the Dietetic Intern is encouraged to contact the UTHealth Houston Director of the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. For unresolved issues the Dietetic Intern may contact the Dean of the School of Public Health.

ACEND only addresses issues related to non-compliance with ACEND accreditation standards. ACEND has established a process for reviewing complaints against accredited programs in order to fulfill its public responsibility for assuring the 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.

ACEND has a Complaint Investigation Form which can be found [online](#). For complaints related to the program's noncompliance with ACEND accreditation standards, students may submit a written complaint to: The Accreditation Council on Education for Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) at The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190 Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995, phone:(312) 899-0040 ext. 5400 toll free: 1 + (800) 877-1600 ext. 5400, E-mail: acend@eatright.org

Appendix A

UTHealth Houston DI Supervised Practice Hours Justification

Activity	Sub-Activity	Sub Hours	Goal Hours	Weeks
Orientation Day for new interns	UT Orientation	4	18	
	Professionalism Module	1		
	WIC	6		
	Long-Term Care	1		
	School Foodservice	3		
	HFB/Brighter Bites	3		
Public Health Nutrition			10	
PH 5030 Nutrition Research & Methods			10	
Culinary Medicine			10	
Garden for Health			10	
Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy			24	
Simulation Lab			24	
Community Rotation			160	≈ 5 weeks at 32 hours per week
Hospital Food Service Management Rotation			128	≈ 4 weeks at 32 hours per week
School Food Service Management Rotation			128	≈ 4 weeks at 32 hours per week
Clinical Rotations			256	≈ 8 weeks at 32 hours per week
Career (Specialty) Rotation			128	≈ 4 weeks at 32 hours per week
Diabetes Seminar			30	
Diabetes Camp			30	
Pediatric Workshop			24	
Nutrition Focused Physical Assessment Workshop			6	
Garden Management & Maintenance (Y1)			16	
Garden Management & Maintenance (Y2)			18	
Practicum Year 1			15	
Practicum Year 2			15	
Volunteering - Nutrition Event(s)			10	
Professional Meetings			2	
TOTAL			1072	

Appendix B

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR DIETETIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS,

September 1, 2021; Effective June 1, 2022 Competencies/ Learning Outcomes for Dietetic Internship Programs

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

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

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

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

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

- CRDN 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
- CRDN 2.2 Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications.
- CRDN 2.3 Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings.
- CRDN 2.4 Function as a member of inter-professional teams.
- CRDN 2.5 Work collaboratively with NDTRs and/or support personnel in other disciplines.
- CRDN 2.6 Refer clients and patients to other professionals and services when needs are beyond individual scope of practice.
- CRDN 2.7 Apply change management strategies to achieve desired outcomes
- CRDN 2.8 Demonstrate negotiation skills.
- CRDN 2.9 Actively contribute to nutrition and dietetics professional and community organizations.
- CRDN 2.10 Demonstrate professional attributes in all areas of practice.
- CRDN 2.11 Show cultural humility in interactions with colleagues, staff, clients, patients and the public.
- CRDN 2.12 Implement culturally sensitive strategies to address cultural differences.

CRDN 2.13 Advocate for local, state or national legislative and regulatory issues or policies impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession.

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

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

- CRDN 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.
- CRDN 3.2 Conduct nutrition focused physical exams.
- CRDN 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)
- CRDN 3.4 Provide instruction to clients/patients for self-monitoring blood glucose, considering diabetes medication and medical nutrition therapy plan.
- CRDN 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.
- CRDN 3.6 Conduct a swallow screen and refer to the appropriate health care professional for full swallow evaluation when needed.
- CRDN 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.
- CRDN 3.8 Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience.
- CRDN 3.9 Develop nutrition education materials that are culturally and age appropriate and designed for the literacy level of the audience.
- CRDN 3.10 Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change.
- CRDN 3.11 Develop and deliver products, programs or services that promote consumer health, wellness and lifestyle management.
- CRDN 3.12 Deliver respectful, science-based answers to client/patient questions concerning emerging trends.
- CRDN 3.13 Coordinate procurement, production, distribution and service of goods and services, demonstrating and promoting responsible use of resources.
- CRDN 3.14 Develop and evaluate recipes, formulas and menus for acceptability and affordability that accommodate the 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.

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

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

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

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

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I, _____, have read the Student Handbook of the UTHealth Houston Advanced Degree and Dietetic Internship Program and the Student Handbook of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health. I understand the contents, and I have been given an opportunity to clarify any information I did not understand. I agree to abide by the terms and policies contained therein as long as I am a student in the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health, and the Dietetic Internship Program.

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health, and the Dietetic Internship Program have made no promise or guarantee that upon graduation from the school, I will obtain employment in dietetics, nor do they ensure that upon completion of the Dietetic Internship, I will pass the registration examination for dietitians.

Dietetic Intern

Printed Name

Date

Internship Director

The DI Handbook is to be reviewed during the Fall Semester each year during the intern's DI experience. The Statement of Understanding should be signed prior to beginning Supervised Practice experiences each year.