

DEPARTMENT OF
**NUTRITION &
INTEGRATIVE
PHYSIOLOGY**

INNOVATION IN EDUCATION | RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY | COMMUNITY OUTREACH



**PROSPECTIVE STUDENT
PROGRAM INFORMATION**

250 South 1850 East, HPER North Room 214 | Salt Lake City, Utah 84112 | health.utah.edu/nutrition-integrative-physiology/

NUIP Degree Programs

Coordinated Master's Degree in Nutrition, Registered Dietitian Pathway

- ▶ The Coordinated Master's Program (CMP) develops entry level registered dietitian nutritionists who are prepared to practice clinical and community nutrition and advance the science and practice of dietetics in the fields of 1) Nutrition Education and Research and 2) Sports Nutrition.
- ▶ Graduates of this program, which is accredited by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, have an exceptionally high pass rate on the national exam for registered dietitians.
- ▶ The program takes two years to complete and offers concentrations in:
 - ▶ Nutrition, Education, and Research
 - ▶ Sports Nutrition

Masters Degree Only, Non-Registered Dietitian pathway

- ▶ Our MS Only, Non-RDN pathway in Nutrition Science enrolls students with undergraduate degrees in dietetics, health science, or a related area. The online program provides advanced education in nutritional biochemistry, macro- and micro-nutrient metabolism, and research methods.
- ▶ The flexibility and accessibility of online classes allows students already working in various health fields to continue to meet their professional commitments while they improve their nutrition knowledge and skills.
- ▶ The program is designed for students that are bachelor's trained dietitians, but would also be available for graduates of other degree programs with a general interest in the topic area.

Alternative Degree Options

Exceptional students with a clinical focus may also ask about completing the CMP requirements along with their PhD, allowing them to ultimately obtain dual PhD/RD credentials.

Options are also available for students to earn a research-based MS degree with emphasis in either:

Nutrition or

Integrated physiology

CMP Overview

Nutrition & Dietetics Employment Information

- Expected to increase 20% by 2020
- Annual wage \$53,250 in May 2010
- For more information about careers in Nutrition and Dietetics visit www.eatright.org or see the *Careers in Nutrition and Dietetics* handout included in this packet.

Exam Pass Rates & Employment

- Program completion rate of 98% over the past 4 years
- RD pass rates have been excellent
- 88% first time pass rate, 95% pass rate in the first year post-graduation
- 98% of students found employment in the field of dietetics shortly after graduation

ACEND Accreditation

- Enrollment of 16 first year and 15 second year students
- Nutrition, Education & Research Concentration
- or
- Sports Nutrition Concentration

CMP Admission Requirements

The CMP program begins in the fall semester and the application deadline for matriculation is February 15th. Submit your application online using [ApplyYourself](#).

What Documents Do I Need?

The following required supporting documentation must be included in your application:

- ❑ **Curriculum Vitae or Resume**
- ❑ **Statement of Purpose:** Please include a 500 word statement describing your motivation for becoming a registered dietitian. Include relevant experience, autobiographical information related to past growth or future potential, and a supporting statement of how the degree will help you achieve your professional goals.
- ❑ **Three academic recommendation letters** directly submitted through ApplyYourself [NOTE: Submitting recommendations using the online system is strongly preferred. If referees are unable to submit online, use the Recommendation Form under Downloadable Forms in ApplyYourself].
- ❑ **Graduate Record Exam (GRE)** (School code: 4853 Dept. code: 0214) taken within the past five years. A GRE score at the fiftieth-percentile or greater is recommended.
- ❑ **Comment section:** In the comment section, list prerequisite courses completed prior to the beginning of the program and the area you wish to study (e.g., Nutrition Research & Education, Sports Nutrition etc.)
- ❑ **Test of Spoken English (TSE):** students whose native language is not English are required to submit TSE scores.

Optional Items

Students may also submit writing samples or the designation of a faculty member in the Post Submission section of the application in ApplyYourself. If you choose to complete these optional items, please notify the department via email at nutrition@health.utah.edu after you have uploaded the document(s).

The selection committee meets in March with notification of acceptance/non-acceptance issued by April 5th.

Scholarships

Scholarships applications are due by February 15th. Available scholarships can be viewed <http://health.utah.edu/nutrition-integrative-physiology/degrees/coordinated-masters/scholarships/>

CMP Curriculum Guide for Prerequisites

Nutrition Education and Research Concentration or Sports Nutrition Concentration

(these course numbers are offered at the University of Utah – Equivalent courses from other accredited colleges are accepted)

Biology

Courses		Credits
BIOL 1210	Principles of Biology	4
BIOL 2420	Human Physiology	4
		Credits 8

Chemistry

Courses		Credits
CHEM Lab	One chemistry Lab is required and may be taken at any level Suggested: CHEM 1215 or 2315	1
CHEM 1210	General Chemistry 1	4
CHEM 1220	General Chemistry 2	4
CHEM 2310	Organic Chemistry	4
CHEM 3510 or BIOL 3510	Biological Chemistry 1	3
		Credits 16

Nutrition

Courses		Credits
NUIP 4440 or NUIP 3010	Advanced Human Nutrition Nutrition Intervention in Treatment and Prevention of Chronic Disease	4
NUIP 5420	Applied Nutrition through the Lifecycle	3
Food Science (variable)	Food Science: the study of the physical, biological and chemical make-up of food. This course is not offered at the University of Utah, but is required as a prerequisite (see Food Science hand out, included in this packet). A separate lab is not required.	3-4
		Credits 10-11

General Ed

Courses		Credits
WRIT 2010	Intermediate Writing: Academic Writing and Research	3
MATH 1050	College Algebra	4
Social Science (one class from the following choices)	ECON as a Social Science (1010, 2010 or 2020) or Introduction to Psychology 1010 or Introduction to Sociology 1010	3-4
		Credits 10-11

Exercise and Sport Science (for Sport Nutrition concentration only)

Course	Credits	
KINES 3091	Physiology of Fitness	4

Food Science Course Offerings

These are some courses that may be available options to complete the food science prerequisite. Other courses may be considered.

- please consult with Jean Zancanella jean.zancanella@hsc.utah.edu to ensure suitability if you choose a course outside of this list.

Online Courses

University	Course #	Credits	Prerequisites	Availability	Cost	Non-degree Seeking Availability
Kansas State University Global Campus	FNDH 413	4	Gen Chem + lab	Fall and Spring (odd years)	\$1,569	Yes
https://global.k-state.edu/humanecology/dietetics/bachelors/curriculum/						
Troy University	KHP 3310 + L310	3+1	None		\$1,352	Apply as a transient student
https://www.troy.edu/admissions/						
University of Illinois	FSHN 414					Yes
https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/						
University of Alabama	NHM 253	3	Chemistry and Nutrition		\$365/CR, \$1095	
http://bamabydistance.ua.edu/						
University of Arizona	NSC 351R	3				Yes
nscadvising@email.arizona.edu						
University of Washington	NUTR 441		Basic NUTR, Gen Chem, O Chem		\$1,074	Yes
https://www.pce.uw.edu/courses/food-and-culinary-science-nutr-441						

Local Courses

University	Course #	Credits	Prerequisites	Availability	Cost	Non-degree Seeking Availability
Utah State University	NDFS 3070	4	Gen Chem, or O Chem			
Brigham Young University	NDFS 250	3	Gen Chem (101 or 105)			

Nutrition Education & Research Concentration

Approximately 11 openings per year selected from the overall CMP application pool

The Nutrition Education and Research Concentration integrates scientific principles of nutrition with critical thinking and communication skills. The concentration prepares students to conduct and interpret research and to communicate evidence-based nutrition advice and counseling.

Students in this concentration obtain additional training in community nutrition and nutrition instruction.

Students selected for this concentration are placed in settings related to nutrition education and research for the community rotation during the first summer of supervised practice and for all of the supervised practice that takes place the second year of the program (capstone experience). Practice sites include a choice of specialty clinics (diabetes, eating disorders, maternal and child clinics, metabolic disorders, pediatric, senior care, dialysis, wellness).

Careers

After completing the CMP, students are prepared for a wide variety of dietetics careers. Students who complete the CMP with the Nutrition Education and Research Concentration have found employment in a variety of settings including:

- ▶ Hospitals
- ▶ Diabetes Treatment Centers
- ▶ Dialysis Clinics
- ▶ Long-term Care Facilities
- ▶ County and State Public Health Programs (The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Health Promotion)
- ▶ Federal Drug Administration (FDA)
- ▶ Research (Industry and academia)
- ▶ Community Colleges or Universities
- ▶ Worksite Wellness
- ▶ Private Practice
- ▶ Wellness Coaching
- ▶ Grocery Stores

Thesis & Focused Area of Study Options

Students participating in the CMP with the Nutrition Education and Research concentration may choose the thesis or focused area of study (FAS) option. Thesis projects and FAS are similar in rigor. Students identify thesis or FAS with counsel from faculty during first year of study.

Nutrition Education & Research Concentration

Course Sequence

Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Occurrence	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Occurrence
First Year Fall Semester				Second Year Fall Semester			
NUIP 6360	Medical Nutrition Therapy I	3	M, W 9:10-10:30am	NUIP 5850 or FPMD 6100 or KINES 7120	Research Methods, Biostatistics I, Physical Activity Interventions	3	TBA
NUIP 6400	Nutrition Communications	3	T, TH 12:25-1:45pm	NUIP 6440	Metabolism of Macronutrients	4	M, W 9:40-11:45am
NUIP 6450	Nutrition Biochemistry	4	T, TH 8:30-10:30am	NUIP 6940	Capstone Supervised Practice*	3	TBA
NUIP 6540	Clinical Assessment Laboratory	3	T 2:00-3:20pm TH 2:00-5:00pm	NUIP 6970 or NUIP 6900	Thesis Research or Directed Nutrition: Research**	2	TBA
Total: 13				Total: 12			
First Year Spring Semester				Second Year Spring Semester			
NUIP 5850	Counseling Skills for Dietitians	1	W 4:10-5:00pm	NUIP 6460	Micronutrient Metabolism	4	M, W 3:05-5:00pm
NUIP 6210	Food Management Analysis and Development	3	M, T 2:00-5:00pm	NUIP 6940	Capstone Supervised Practice*	3	TBA
Elective		3	TBA	NUIP 6970 or NUIP 6900	Thesis Research or Directed Nutrition: Research**	3	TBA
NUIP 6220	Nutrition Policy	3	W 2:00-4:00pm	UUHSC 6700	Inter-professional Education (IPE)	0.5	TBA
NUIP 6380	Medical Nutrition Therapy II & Lab	4	T, TH 9:10-10:30am Lab - TH 1:00-4:00pm				
Total: 14				Total: 10.5			
Summer Term I				Summer Term II			
NUIP 6930	Supervised Practice Experience	10	M-F 8:00-4:30	NUIP 6940	Capstone Supervised Practice*	1-6 remaining credits	May 15- July 15 8:00-4:30
NUIP TBA	Nutritional Epidemiology	3	Online				
Total: 13				Total: 6			

* Students must complete a total of 6 credits of Capstone during the CMP (either 2nd year Fall/Spring, or Summer semester)

** Focused Area of Study (non-thesis option)

Total Program Credit Hours 62.5

Curriculum Equivalents:

12-15 weeks in each semester excluding examination time

1 Credit = 1 lecture hour/week

1 Credit = 3 laboratory hour/week

1 Credit = 60 supervised practice hours

Sports Nutrition Concentrations

Approximately 4 openings per year selected from the overall CMP application pool

The Sports Nutrition Concentration is designed to integrate scientific principles of nutrition as they relate to exercise and sports and prepare students to become Board Certified Specialists in Sports Dietetics (CSSD).

Selected on a competitive basis, students pursuing the Sports Nutrition Concentration will obtain supervised training in various aspects of sport and exercise nutrition as part of the practice hours required in the CMP. Registered Dietitians in the Nutrition Science Master's Program (NSMP) Sports Nutrition Concentration will also complete sports nutrition practicum hours as part of their specialty training.

Selection

Students selected for the Sports Nutrition Concentration will be placed in settings related to sports, exercise, or wellness depending on the interests of the student, preceptor needs, and director approval. NUIP offers four main sports nutrition practicum sites. However, opportunities also exist for students to complete practicum hours in various aspects of health and sports such as clinical eating disorders, community health, corporate wellness, and Olympic sports.

Careers

After completing the CMP or NSMP with the Sports Nutrition Concentration, students are prepared to become board certified specialists in Sports Dietetics following two years of practice as a registered dietitian. Students receive the same training as those completing the Nutrition Education and Research Concentration with the addition of a specialty area – sports nutrition.

Graduate students with the Sports Nutrition Concentration have found employment in a variety of settings including:

- ▶ Sports Medicine Clinics
- ▶ Collegiate Athletics
- ▶ Professional Teams
- ▶ Olympic Teams
- ▶ Corporate Wellness
- ▶ Research
- ▶ University and Community Colleges
- ▶ Health and Fitness Clinics

Thesis & Non-Thesis Options

The CMP and NSMP with the Sports Nutrition Concentration is generally considered a non-thesis track; however, a thesis option may be possible with the Sports Nutrition Director's approval.

Sports Nutrition Concentration Course Sequence

Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Occurrence	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Occurrence
First Year Fall Semester				Second Year Fall Semester			
NUIP 6360	Medical Nutrition Therapy I	3	M, W 9:10-10:30am	NUIP 5850 or FPMD 6100 or KINES 7120	Research Methods, Biostatistics I, Physical Activity Interventions	3	TBA
NUIP 6400	Nutrition Communications	3	T, TH 12:25-1:45pm	NUIP 6440	Metabolism of Macronutrients	4	M, W 9:40-11:45am
NUIP 6450	Nutrition Biochemistry	4	T, TH 8:30-10:30am	NUIP 6940	Capstone Supervised Practice*	3	TBA
NUIP 6540	Clinical Assessment Laboratory Lab	3	T 2:00-3:20pm TH 2:00-5:00pm	NUIP 6970 or NUIP 6900	Thesis Research or Directed Nutrition Research**	2	TBA
KINES 6320	Exercise and Disease	3	T 4:35-7:05pm				
Total:		16		Total:		12	
First Year Spring Semester				Second Year Spring Semester			
NUIP 5850	Counseling Skills for Dietitians	1	W 4:15-5:05pm	NUIP 6460	Metabolism of Micronutrients	4	M, W 3:05-5:00pm
NUIP 6210	Food Management Analysis and Development	3	M, T 2:00-5:00pm	NUIP 6970 or NUIP 6900	Thesis Research or Directed Nutrition Research**	3	TBA
NUIP 6220	Nutrition Policy	3	W 2:00-4:00pm	NUIP 6910	Advanced Sports Nutrition Seminar	1	T 12:25-1:45pm
NUIP 6320	Advanced Sports Nutrition and Metabolism	3	T 12:25-1:45 T, TH 10:45-12:05	UUHSC 6700	Inter-professional Education (IPE)	0.5	TBA
NUIP 6380	Medical Nutrition Therapy II & Lab	4	T, TH 9:10-10:30 Lab - TH 1:00-4:00pm	NUIP 6940	Capstone Supervised Practice*	3	TBA
Total:		14		Total:		11.5	
Summer Term I				Summer Term II			
NUIP 6930	Supervised Practice Experience	10	TBA		*If applicable, students graduating in Summer must be enrolled in at least 3 credits, recommend registering for either NUIP 6900* TBA or NUIP 6970 TBA	3	
Total:		10		Total:		3	

*Must be registered for the semester student defends. If Capstone is not done during Fall and Spring semester, the student must register in the Summer.

** Focused Area of Study (non-thesis option)

Total Program Credit Hours 63.5

Curriculum Equivalents:

12-15 weeks in each semester excluding examination time

1 Credit = 1 lecture hour/week

1 Credit = 3 laboratory hour/week

1 Credit = 60 supervised practice hours

Tuition & Fees

Housing

- Graduate Student housing, student/family housing, apartment and home rentals
- Estimated housing costs \$700-\$1000 per month

Trans- portation

- Costs are variable depending on location of practice sites and use of car or public transportation
- Student should expect to travel and are responsible for transportation and living expenses

Food Costs

- While highly variable, \$500 per month is an estimate of food costs for a graduate student

Health Insurance

- Student Health Services offers health care at 40-60% of the usual rate.
- Depending on the deductible you choose, rates approximate at \$156 per/month for individual or \$188 for a family
- <http://studenthealth.utah.edu/>

Vaccines

- Immunizations at the Student Health Services are approximately \$75

Textbooks

- Approximately \$500-\$800 each year

Computer

- Students have access to computers on campus, but many prefer to have their own

Computer Software

- Most students purchase Endnote, STATA, or SPSS, spending approximately \$200 on software through University Software Program.
- Microsoft Windows, PowerPoint, and Excel can be accessed at no charge through the University Network

Pro. Fees

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) Student Membership is approximately \$50

Pro. Meetings

- Students may attend a variety of Professional meetings while in the CMP based on their research interests
- Funding for registration may be available through the department, but students will want to budget funds for travel and accommodations

Employment

- CMP students may receive assistantships as teaching or research assistants and work 10-20 hours per week. Outside employment is not recommended, particularly during the supervised practice rotations taking place the summer between the first and second year

University of Utah Nutrition & Integrative Physiology Coordinated Master's Program FAQs

Where can I find more information about the Coordinated Master's Program?

Information regarding the program can be found in three places:

Online at Coordinated Master's Program [website](#)

2018 [CMP Handbook.pdf](#)

You may also attend a perspective student information session, check [here](#) for upcoming dates.

What prerequisites are required for admission into the program?

The prerequisites are listed here: [Prerequisites](#)
Equivalent courses from accredited colleges and universities are accepted. For the CMS program, please contact Jean Zancanella, Academic Advisor for transcript evaluation at jean.zancanella@health.utah.edu; for Sports Nutrition, contact Kary Woodruff, MS, CSSD, RD (801) 585-5936 kary.woodruff@utah.edu.

Sports Nutrition

In addition to the CMP prerequisites, the Sports Nutrition Concentration prerequisites include: Exercise Physiology.

Is there a minimum GRE score required?

A GRE score at the fiftieth-percentile or greater is recommended.

How do I apply for the program?

www.applyyourself.com

See application section under the Coordinated Masters Program <http://health.utah.edu/nutrition-integrative-physiology/degrees/coordinated-masters/>

Application Deadlines:

Department of Nutrition and Integrative Physiology: February 15

How many students are accepted into the program?

CMP16 total students are accepted per year. Approximately 60 applications are received each year.

Sports Nutrition

Approximately 4 out of the 16 CMP students are accepted into the Sports Concentration per year.

Is it possible to begin one of the programs in January (spring semester) instead of August (fall semester)?

No. Applications are only accepted by the deadlines outlined above with an August start.

Can I take classes before I am accepted into the program (non-matriculated)?

Yes. Typically students are asked to discuss this on an individual basis with the advisor of the program or possible mentor. A maximum of six graduate credits (for the CMP program) can be transferred into the program. Our advisor is available for questions at Jean.zancanella@health.utah.edu

Can I take prerequisites during the graduate program?

No. All classes must be completed prior to the start of the program.

What types of sites are available to complete supervised practice hours in the Sports Nutrition Concentration?

Please see Clinical Settings <http://health.utah.edu/nutrition-integrative-physiology/degrees/coordinated-masters/clinical-settings.php#clinical-settings> on our website.

Who can I contact for academic advising and further questions?

For questions related specifically to the Coordinated Master's Program, please contact Jean Zancanella, Academic Advisor, at 801-581-5280 or jean.zancanella@health.utah.edu. For the Sports Nutrition concentration, contact Kary Woodruff, MS, CSSD, RD at 801-585-5936 or kary.woodruff@Utah.edu.

Is it possible to be a part time student in the Coordinated Master's Program?

The CMP is designed to be completed in a minimum of two years. However, the student, as mandated by the Graduate School, may take up to four years to complete the degree. The CMP will only be extended beyond two years for an approved leave of absence or the completion of the thesis/focused area of study, <http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/leave.php>.

I see you offer a program that is online. Is it possible to complete the requirements for the RD credential through this online program?

This pathway (MS degree in Nutrition and Integrative Physiology with emphasis in Nutrition) is designed for individuals with undergraduate degrees in dietetics, health science, or a related area. It has also been popular for bachelor's level dietitians that are interested in a master's degree. This program provides advanced education in nutritional biochemistry, macro- and micro-nutrient metabolism, and research methods. The flexibility and accessibility of the online version of the program allows for students already working in various health fields to continue to meet their professional commitments while they improve their nutrition knowledge and skills. The program is designed for students who are bachelor's trained dietitians, or who are interested in increasing their knowledge of nutrition, but do not plan to become a registered dietitian.

Job Growth Rate Proves Healthy for Dietitians

By Emilia Benton, JOBS CORRESPONDENT Published 7:52 pm, Sunday, December 6, 2015



Photo: (c) Liquidlibrary

More dietitians and nutritionists will be needed to provide care for patients with various medical conditions and to advise people who want to improve their overall health.

As the role of food in preventing and treating illnesses such as diabetes is now well-known, the need for registered dietitians is continuing to grow at a rapid rate.

According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), employment of dietitians and nutritionists is projected to grow 21 percent from 2012 to 2022, faster than the average for all occupations. More dietitians and nutritionists will be needed to provide care for patients with various medical conditions and to advise people who want to improve their overall health. The median annual wage for dietitians was \$55,240 in May 2012.

Most dietitians and nutritionists have a bachelor's degree and have participated in supervised training through an internship or as part of their coursework. Many states require dietitians and nutritionists to be licensed and many employers require a graduate degree.

UTHealth programs

The [University of Texas Health Science Center](#) at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health offers a dietetic internship program in the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living, which is in the school's department of health promotion and behavioral science. Dietetic interns complete their Masters of Public Health and Dietetic Competencies simultaneously.

The concentration for the UTHealth dietetic internship program is public health nutrition. Dietetic interns delve into this area of concentration through didactic work, supervised practice and their final specialty practice rotation with staff in an area of public health nutrition selected by each intern.

The dietetic internship program requires a minimum of 1,271 hours of supervised practice in four major areas of dietetics: community nutrition, food service systems management, medical nutrition therapy and specialty practice in public health nutrition.

"A good candidate for a dietitian job is one who works independently, is decisive, ethical, self-motivated and has strong critical thinking and leadership skills," said [Laura Moore](#), M.Ed., RD, LD, director, dietetic internship program, Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living, the [University of Texas School of Public Health](#). "A passion for working in the area of public health and educating others on the benefits of healthy living also is important."

Graduates of the dietetic internship program and the [UTHealth School of Public Health](#) degree program are prepared to practice as entry-level dietitians with a graduate degree and meet requirements for active membership in the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#).

Upon successful completion of the dietetic internship, the graduate is eligible to take the dietitians registration examination through the [Commission on Dietetic Registration Exam](#) and is qualified to apply for dietetic licensure through the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

SHSU programs

[Sam Houston State University](#) in Huntsville also offers a combined Master of Science in dietetics and dietetic internship degree program with an emphasis in community research and wellness. The Master of Science degree and the dietetic internship are completed concurrently over a 16-month period beginning in August.

A minimum of 1,200 practicum hours must be completed for the dietetic internship and a total of 36 hours for the graduate program. Students complete rotations in clinical, community and food service systems management. Preceptor sites include major regional medical centers, community hospitals, various community/preventative health agencies and public school food service facilities.

Upon successful completion of this combined M.S. in dietetics and DI program, graduates will receive the verification statement indicating eligibility to sit for the Registration Examination for Dietitians administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration ([CDR](#)).

Graduates will also be eligible to become active members in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. After successful completion of the RD exam, graduates may apply for licensure in Texas and other states that require licensure of dietitians.

This plan of study combines the master's degree requirements with nine hours of practicum in the area preceptor sites and 12 hours in one of the following minor fields: business, education (counseling), psychology (counseling) or health. This program is accredited by ACEND, the accrediting body for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, formerly the [American Dietetic Association](#) (ADA).

Further details

For more information about UTHealth's program, visit sph.uth.edu.

For SHSU, visit www.shsu.edu.



Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Academy Responds to Wall Street Journal Op-Ed About Giving Dietary Advice

I am writing in regard to the op-ed in the February 1 Wall Street Journal headlined “Do you need a college degree to give diet advice?” In answering the question posed in the headline, the authors ignore important distinctions between giving general dietary advice and providing potentially lifesaving services that require significant levels of education and training.

There is an enormous difference between offering people routine suggestions for eating better and providing safe, effective counseling and treatment – for example, to clients and hospital patients who have life-threatening conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and kidney disorders.

Nutrition is a science, and registered dietitian nutritionists must earn the qualifications to provide services to treat and manage these serious conditions, and much more. The medical nutrition therapy we provide is as complicated as the diseases and conditions we treat, in patients who often are very sick. Individuals without formal training and credentials could not possibly know how to properly treat such patients.

RDNs alone have the knowledge, the skills, the background, the established standards of practice and the ongoing continuing education requirements to be people’s most reliable source of nutrition-related advice and services. The practice of dietetics is regulated and operates under a strict code of ethics; while “coaches” and similarly titled practitioners can operate without any oversight whatsoever.

RDNs’ unparalleled skills are put to work every day in hospitals, schools, public health clinics, nursing homes, fitness centers, food management, food industry, universities, research and private practice. RDNs are advocates for advancing the nutritional status of Americans and people around the world.

I would not want to undergo an appendectomy performed by someone who does not have a medical license, nor would I want a non-attorney arguing my case in a courtroom. It is a matter of common sense and public safety to require certain levels of training and experience to work in these areas. The same goes for nutrition services. That is why RDNs are credentialed at the national level by the Commission on Dietetic Registration and, in most states, like physicians and attorneys, are licensed by appropriate agencies that are established to protect the public.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, holds that academic, experience and exam standards at the registered dietitian nutritionist level are the minimum qualifications necessary to be a safe, effective provider of nutrition services such as medical nutrition therapy.

While the Academy is not involved in the Florida case mentioned in the article, we are monitoring it as it proceeds through the state system. The Academy works with its members, as well as legislators and other stakeholders, in every state to protect consumers and ensure high standards for nutrition and dietetics practice.

Manifesting the Academy’s long support of those who serve in the military since our founding during World War I, we continue to work with states to enable service members and their spouses who hold the RDN credential to obtain state dietetics licenses with greater ease and flexibility.

Untold millions of people are in need of safe, science-based nutrition and dietary advice. Seeking the services of a registered dietitian nutritionist is the best way to ensure you are getting the best possible help in eating right and staying healthy.

Donna S. Martin, EdS, RDN, LD, SNS, FAND
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
President 2017-2018



Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

Nutrition, a Career Change & Grad School

www.accordingtoelle.com

What resources did you find useful when deciding which programs to apply to?

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a great page <http://www.eatright.org/BecomeanRDorDTR/content.aspx?id=8092#.UFaTmkJqeaA> for aspiring RD students. It used to be really confusing but I think it's gotten better over the years. The site lists all of the accredited programs, both undergraduate and graduate, all over the country. I recommend clicking through the ones that interest you and researching individual programs online. Emailing program coordinators with specific questions is incredibly helpful too.

Would you recommend a coordinated or uncoordinated (didactic) program?

There are a couple of different ways to becoming a RD but if you are going to pursue a degree, either a Bachelors or Masters, I'd personally recommend the coordinated programs. These programs are designed and accredited so that you meet all of the criteria to take the national R.D. exam upon graduation, coursework and internships combined. Contrastingly, RD students in didactic programs must finish their coursework and then complete their internships, which involves entering a lottery and "match" into an internship spot, just like medical students matching into residency. Students may not get their first, second or third choice.... The last I heard there are more dietetic students than internship spots which means that some students in uncoordinated programs may not get an internship the first time around. I've found this makes coordinated programs more desirable and ultimately, more competitive.

What are some things you wish someone had told you before you applied?

In general:

Don't stress over that C in Organic Chemistry. It doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things.
Don't obsess over the previous year's admission statistics to predict your odds of getting in. It's a waste of time.
Don't freak out about having to make all new friends. Nutrition students usually have a lot of things in common. I met some incredible girls who are now some of my best friends purely because we all loved to run.

How did you complete all of the prerequisites for your grad program?

At the time I decided to pursue a Master's in nutrition, I was conveniently employed by a university. Part of the benefits of being a full-time employee at The University of North Carolina is a tuition credit. This allowed me to take up to 3 courses per academic year completely *for free*. This worked out perfectly because many of the prereqs were sequential: Anatomy & Physiology before General Chem, General Chem before Organic Chem... I kept my full-time job and took all 7 of my prereqs 1 class at a time. I highly recommend getting a job with similar perks but I realize I got lucky. A lot of my friends took their prereqs at a local community college while also working full-time. This is more affordable than taking classes at a university – just make sure you check with the programs you plan to apply to to make sure they accept community college credit.

How are you funding your education and what resources would you recommend?

Student loans, and lots of them. Leaving a full-time job and living on loans was hard, but worth it. UNC has one of the lowest in-state tuition rates among state schools in the country. My degree cost about half as it would if I weren't a North Carolina resident but it's still a lot of money when you consider all of the income you won't be earning while in school full-time. I recommend looking at state school programs & establishing residency before applying. If you've got an impressive application, talk with schools to see what potential funding is available. Keep in mind the starting salary of a Registered Dietitian and let that help guide you in choosing what schools to apply to. A more expensive degree isn't usually any better.

What do you see yourself doing with your degree?

I've been asking myself that question a lot lately! A year ago I would have said I see myself working in a hospital as a clinical dietitian. I enjoy helping patients in the hospital but as you can probably tell, I'm also a fairly creative person and there's not much room for creativity in critically ill patients. This has me contemplating a combination of other options like building a private practice, doing freelance nutrition writing and also growing my blog.

What are your most meaningful experiences, internships, & classes since you've started your degree?

I've always seen myself working as a clinical dietitian and helping people 1-on-1 with nutrition so I naturally liked and did well in my clinical courses related to patient counseling, assessment and medical nutrition therapy. I've most enjoyed my and dietetic internship at UNC Hospitals. I completed 12 weeks working in adult, inpatient nutrition this summer and am now working on 10 weeks in pediatrics.

Once you find a program that fits, what do you think is most critical for acceptance?

Experience. Nutrition-related experience is great but don't discount life experience either. A lot of graduate programs take into consideration what you've done since undergrad and often prefer applicants with a few years of work, school & volunteer experience after college. Undergraduate GPAs & GRE scores are important but they're not the end-all, be-all.

Focus on current volunteer & work opportunities, networking and doing well in your requisite courses. Here are just a few ideas & tips:

Volunteer at a food bank or get involved with nutrition programs like Share Our Strength.

Shadow a Registered Dietitian to get a feel for the profession. Talk about the good, the bad and the ugly parts of the job.

Research your top 2 programs, inside and out. Visit the schools and make an appointment to chat with faculty you find interesting and/or admission committee members.

Highlight all of your pertinent experience in your application, no matter how small it seems.

Don't be afraid to send an addendum with your latest activities or an additional reference letter once your application is in. I did both of these things. It lets the admissions committee know you're dedicated and you care enough to follow up.

Applying to Graduate Programs in Dietetics

Here are some helpful resources from the internet to help you in your preparation:

- ▶ <http://www.justapinchblog.com/how-to-become-a-registered-dietitian/>
- ▶ <http://www.foodandnutrition.org/Stone-Soup/> (see student section)
- ▶ <http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=6442485432>
- ▶ <http://fscn.cfans.umn.edu/undergraduate-programs/nutrition/dpd/increase-competitiveness>
- ▶ https://www.csuchico.edu/nfsc/programs_nfsc/careers_jobs_internships/tip_sforapplyingtoDIs.pdf