

# 2023 Preceptor Survey Results

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NDEP Preceptor Committee

The Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) Preceptor Committee collaborates with Academy staff on preceptor initiatives. Towards that end the Preceptor committee periodically surveys our preceptors to identify their needs and wants which can then influence the committee’s work. The most recent survey was conducted earlier this year and some of the salient points are shared in this brief report.

The 2017 preceptor survey was revised by the 2022-23 NDEP preceptor committee and shared on NDEP listserv to understand current interests and needs of preceptors. The 2022-23 Preceptor committee members included Wynnie Hoodis (preceptor director), Mridul Datta, Gena Seraita, Coleen Liscano, Cyndy Endrizal, Annette Besnilian, Amy Wilke, Alecia Hayes, Stephanie Stockslager, Pippa Kaczowski, Cindy Culver, Christina Gabrielle, Alice White, and Jenny Bratlie. The survey was sent to 1412 NDEP members and was open from January 30- February 20, 2023. NDEP members were asked to share with preceptors who may not be members of the Academy or NDEP. Since we cannot quantify how many NDEP members forwarded the survey link to non-Academy and/or non-NDEP members, we used the actual surveys sent out to estimate the response rate, which was over 23% (n = 329 responses).

## Demographics

Most of the respondents (67%) were preceptors for Dietetic Internship programs (Figure 1).

Approximately 4% preceptors were affiliated with (Future) Graduate programs; 6% reported serving as preceptors for the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) and one preceptor was affiliated with a Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (NDTR) program. Although we did not quantify, several preceptors reported affiliation with multiple different programs. Over 36%

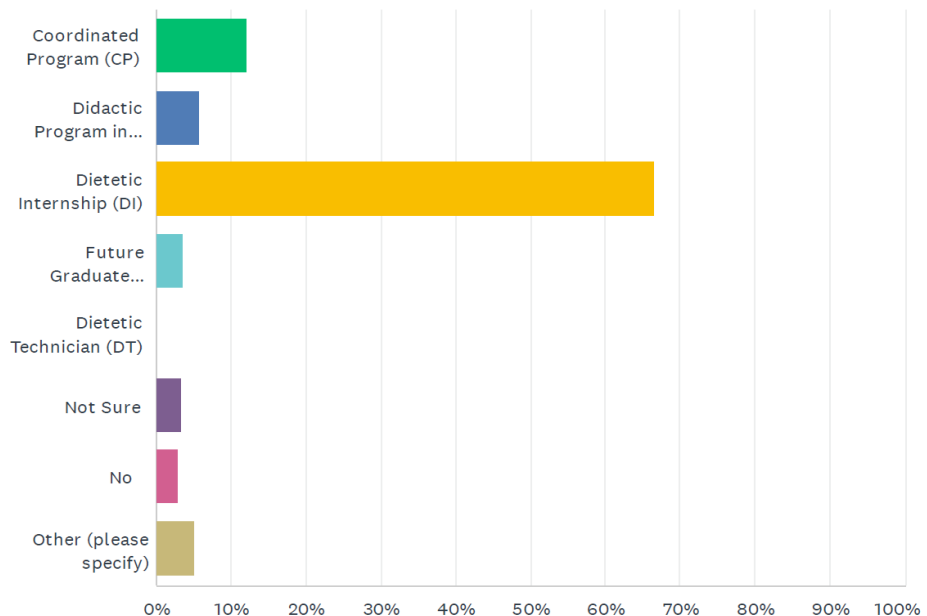


Figure 1. Program affiliation of preceptors

of the respondents were not members of the Academy and almost 78% were not members of NDEP. Most of the preceptors were Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (95%) many with advanced certifications such as CDCES, CSO, CSG, IBCLC, CNSC, etc. Two Registered Nurses and an NDTR were among the preceptors who responded to this survey.

Almost 60% of the preceptors had a master’s degree, 34% had a bachelor’s degree and 6% with Doctoral degrees Figure 2). The number of students precepted varied considerably from 1 to

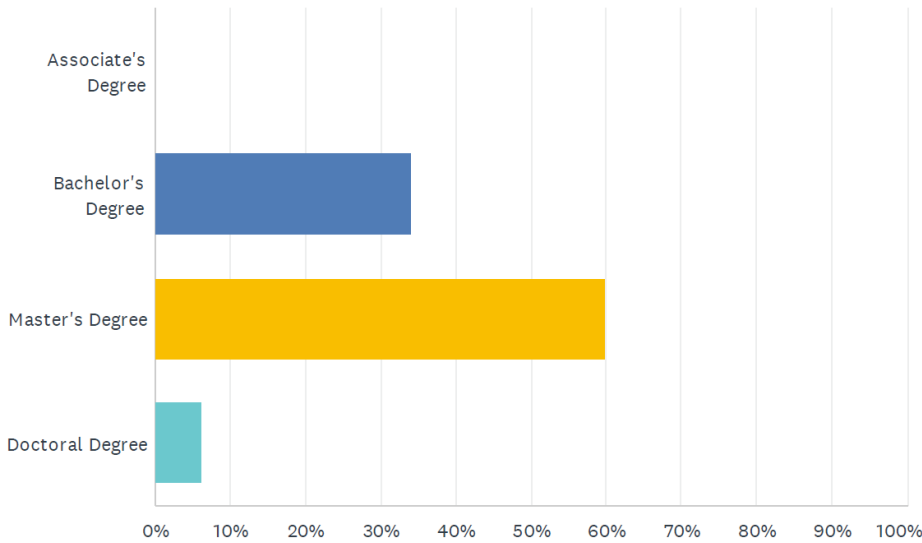


Figure 2. Educational qualification of preceptors

more than 10 annually. Most preceptors (27%) reported precepting 5-10 students each year followed by 26% of preceptors who mentored two students each year. Most of the preceptors reported mentoring one intern/student at a time. Most of the preceptors who responded to the survey were Medical Nutrition Therapy

preceptors (56%) followed by Community Nutrition/public health (27) and Food Systems Management (20%). Another 14% of the preceptors reported mentoring students/interns for other rotations such as continuous quality improvement, diversity, equity, and inclusion, dental, research, etc.

### Preceptor expectations

Preceptors were asked to identify what knowledge and/or skill students/interns should possess before they started the specific rotation that the responding preceptors were mentoring them for. Some of the most frequently reported expectations are presented in Table 1. Additionally, many preceptors commented that students should have “an open mind”, have “basic knowledge of the nutrition care process and therapeutic diets”, and “be flexible and willing to learn”.

Professionalism and critical thinking skills were also frequently reported to be found wanting in the students/interns by several respondents.

Table 1. Preceptor expectation of student/intern knowledge/skills at start of rotation		
Medical Nutrition Therapy	Community Nutrition	Food Systems Management
Lifecycle nutrition	Food insecurity	Menu writing/planning
Medical terminology	Basics of WIC program	Standardizing recipes
Nutrition care process	Social determinants of health	Estimating food waste
Enteral & Parenteral calculations	Federal assistance programs	Basic sanitation practices
Nutrition assessment/NFPE		Budget process
Malnutrition assessment		Food safety/Servsafe
Digestion, absorption & Physiology		School breakfast & lunch programs

Food/drug interactions; Pharmacology		
Motivational interviewing/ Counseling skills/talking to patients		

In response to the questions asking about specific resources educational institutions/programs can provide, the top three most requested items were competencies that students need to complete at the site (75%), student evaluations (64%) and list of assignments to complete (51%) (Figure 3). If program directors are interested in responses to the “other” category in figure three, those responses can be accessed by logging on to this URL: <https://rb.gy/6fnan>

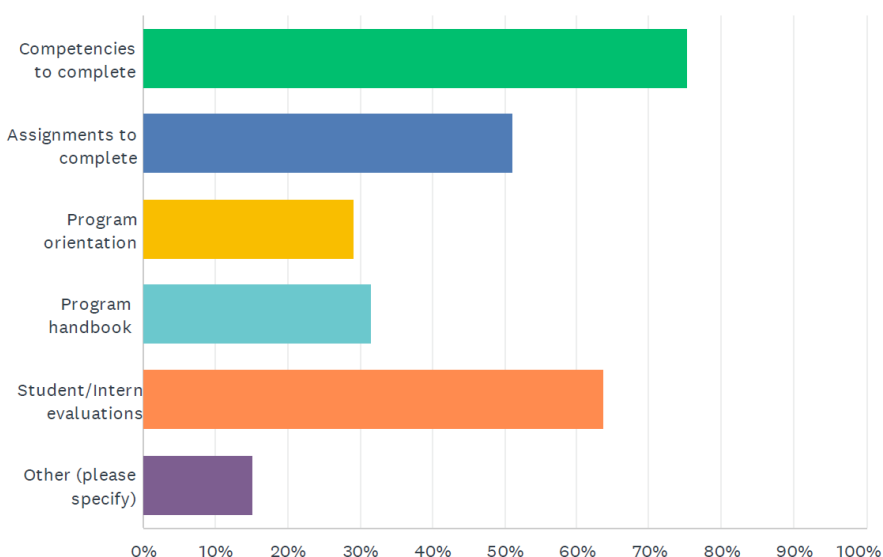


Figure 3. Resources from educational institutions/programs

### Reasons, barriers, and incentives for precepting

The importance of training future dietetic professionals (79%) was the number one reason selected by preceptors as to why they engage in precepting. Rounding up the top three reasons for precepting included giving back to the profession (71%) and joy of precepting (66%). Other reasons reported for precepting include ability to stay current (41%), leadership opportunity (36%), and employer requirement (28%). The biggest barrier to precepting was time (85%) followed by lack of financial incentives (45%), unprepared (42%) and unmotivated students (39%). Top three incentives that could motivate dietetic professionals to precept include reimbursement for Academy membership (69%), financial compensation (66%), and CPEUs (65%). Although CPEU’s are available for precepting under the Leadership sphere of the Professional Development Portfolio, about 35% of respondents were not aware of this fact. Those who were aware requested an increase in the number of CPEU’s available for precepting. CPEUs are also available for completing the 8-hour Preceptor training which most preceptors reported (65%) that they had not completed.

The preceptor committee would like to thank the respondents for completing this survey to provide their feedback to help our committee focus our efforts to better provide services to our professional community. We hope the information gleaned from the responses can be useful to the institutions and programs to provide resources to the preceptors to help prepare students for their internship/supervised experiential learning. In addition to disseminating the results of this survey, the preceptor committee will review the feedback received in this survey to prioritize our next steps to best assist preceptors.

We are also appreciative of the time and effort all our preceptors have invested to mentor the next generation of RDNs. As a reminder, if you would like to complete the free 8-hour preceptor training, you can access the course by accessing this URL: <https://rb.gy/llos6>.