
ACEND® Standards Update

May, 2016

Associate Degree

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

the accrediting agency for the

 Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

Your Input is Needed

ACEND currently has two major data collection projects in process and encourages your participation in both of them. The draft 2017 Accreditation Standards were released in February and are available on the ACEND Standards Committee website: www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards. ACEND invites comments on the draft 2017 Standards until **May 13, 2016** at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2017Std2>.

ACEND is also conducting a validation study of the draft competencies and performance indicators for the future education model associate, bachelor and master degree programs. More than 16,000 educators and practitioners received invitations to provide input. ACEND encourages your participation in the validation study; these surveys will close **May 20, 2016**.

Associate Degree Programs

ACEND currently accredits, under the 2012 Standards and the draft 2017 Standards, associate degree programs designed to prepare graduates to become nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTR). The educational preparation of these programs focuses on development of knowledge and skills in areas of clinical and community nutrition and foodservice management. Graduates of these programs are eligible to take the NDTR registration exam. They typically work in healthcare institutional settings such as hospitals and long term care facilities. They assist the registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) with providing clinical services and work more independently managing foodservice operations.

The proposed future education model associate degree prepared practitioner will be a much different practitioner. Work of this practitioner will be more similar to the community health worker but will have a stronger skills set in food and nutrition. This future associate degree prepared practitioner will support NDTRs and RDNs in community settings and work with individuals in their homes focusing on nutrition and health promotion. They will assist in monitoring plans of care, collecting basic assessment data, demonstrating food preparation and food label reading skills and helping build relationships in the community. Because this associate degree practitioner will be a new nutrition and dietetics practitioner in the market place, there is not currently a credential for this position. Once there are sufficient numbers of these practitioners in the marketplace, the Commission on Dietetic Registration will be able to collect data on their practice and explore the development of a credential for them.

Virtual Town Hall

ACEND has received several requests from educators who teach during the time of the current virtual town hall to consider offering the town hall at a different time. Effective with the June 9th town hall, the time of the town hall will switch to 4:00 pm CT on the second Thursday of each month. See www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards for information on how to connect to the town hall meeting.

For Additional Information

- Review information on the ACEND Standards Committee Website www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards.
- Review back issues of the monthly ACEND Standards Updates for questions that have been raised about ACEND's Standards work and responses to those questions that are posted on the ACEND Standards Committee Website www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards
- Participate in a monthly ACEND virtual town hall on the 2nd Thursday of each month; information on how to connect to the town hall is available at www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards.
- Contact ACEND (acend@eatright.org; 312-899-4872).

Questions That Have Come to ACEND

Question: What process was used to develop the 2017 Standards? What input did educators and practitioners have in the process?

ACEND Response: The seven-member ACEND Standards Committee, which consists of educator, practitioner, public and student ACEND Board members, provided leadership to the review of the 2012 Standards and the development of the 2017 Standards. The Committee, which meets twice a month for 90+ minute conference call meetings, began discussions on the review of the 2012 Standards in 2014. The Committee worked with consultant, Marty Sharpe, to review standards of other programmatic accreditors, develop a questionnaire for stakeholder input on the 2012 Accreditation Standards, analyze stakeholder input and determine changes needed in the 2012 Standards. The Committee launched a survey in spring 2015 to gather input from stakeholders (program directors, faculty, preceptors, program reviewers) about the 2012 Standards and changes needed; more than 400 stakeholders provided input. Committee members also attended the spring 2015 NDEP meetings to talk with educators about enhancements and changes that were needed in the 2012 Standards. In addition to the twice monthly conference calls, the committee also had in person meetings in July and November 2015 to review stakeholder and consultant input and develop the 2017 Standards. The Standards Committee chairs meet on weekly phone calls to review information, plan committee meeting agenda, discuss issues, and develop presentations for the ACEND Board, FNCE® ACEND Forum and for NDEP area meetings. The Standards Committee presented the draft 2017 Standards to the ACEND Board in a webinar in January 2016 and held extensive discussions with Board members both during the webinar and at the ACEND Board meeting where the Board voted to release the draft standards for public comment. The Standards Committee developed and released a survey to obtain public comment on the draft 2017 Standards. The Committee will review the input provided on that survey and make changes as needed to the draft 2017 Standards. If there are any substantive changes made, the committee will release the revised 2017 Standards for another round of public review and comment before the Board finalizes them.

Question: Why did ACEND add an outcome measure related to the percent of students who are preceptors to the draft 2017 Standards?

ACEND Response: ACEND has proposed in the draft 2017 Standards a new program objective, stating the percent of program graduates who are expected to be involved as preceptors or instructors in the education of future RDNs or NDTRs within five years of program completion, be added as a program objective for all programs. ACEND is concerned about the shortage of preceptors to assist in the supervised practice experiences for students in nutrition and dietetics programs. ACEND also believes that serving as preceptors is an important role of an RDN and NDTR, thus developing the needed skills for the role was added to the knowledge and competency statements. To help assess the effectiveness of programs in preparing students for this role, ACEND also added an objective to track program success. Programs will set their own target for this measure.

Question: The draft 2017 Standards indicate that only the one year pass rate will be monitored. What will happen with programs who are currently being monitored because their first time pass rate is below the benchmark?

ACEND Response: When the ACEND Board releases the final version of the 2017 Standards, they will also provide an implementation date, the date all programs will be expected to come into compliance with the new standards. After that date, programs will be evaluated based on the 2017 Standards and changes in monitoring or accreditation status will be made as needed.

Question: If we are writing our self-study report for a Fall 2016 site visit, can we incorporate hours of simulation for the supervised practice hours?

ACEND Response: A self-study report being written for a Fall 2016 site visit would be written under the 2012 Standards. The 2012 Standards do allow simulation to be used when real-life activities are not available; when real-life activities may endanger students, patients or clients; or when students need additional practice to develop knowledge and skills. Simulation may be used for supervised practice hours when students perform work-related tasks that contribute to the acquisition of desired competencies.

Question: Why was logic added as a foundation knowledge requirement in the draft 2017 Standards?

ACEND Response: The concept of logic, i.e. being able to reason, analyze and construct valid arguments, was added to the draft 2017 Standards as ACEND believed it to be central to developing the foundation for several of the knowledge and competency requirements (KRDN 1.3 Apply critical thinking skills; CRDN 1.3 Justify programs, products, services and care using appropriate evidence or data; KRDN 2.7 Demonstrate identification with the nutrition and dietetics profession through activities such as participation in professional organizations and advocating for issues impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession; CRDN 1.4 Evaluate emerging research for application in nutrition and dietetics practice; CRDN 1.6 Incorporate critical-thinking skills in overall practice; CRDN 2.8 Demonstrate negotiation skills; CRDN 2.14 Demonstrate advocacy on local, state or national legislative and regulatory issues or policies impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession).

Question: Why is ACEND continuing to require that program directors be full time in the draft 2017 Standards?

ACEND Response: The ACEND Standards Committee members discussed this requirement at some length. ACEND chose to leave the full-time requirement as it was in the 2012 Standards as they believe students are better served by having someone who is available to current and prospective students on a full time basis. The program also is better served because a full-time employee likely is more involved with activities and committees that involve interactions with faculty and staff in other disciplines, departments and programs which can help facilitate interprofessional opportunities for students and recognition of the program within the institution.

Question: If a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) graduate cannot get into a supervised practice program, can the student be accepted into a coordinated program in dietetics (CP)?

ACEND Response: ACEND policies do not prohibit a DPD graduate from applying and being accepted into a CP. A number of DPD graduates have completed CPs.

Question: What is needed to meet expectations in the draft 2017 Standards that the program director (PD) provide 12-month coverage? How does this impact those programs that have PDs with a nine-month appointment?

ACEND Response: The expectation is that someone is available to answer phone calls and emails from current and prospective students, ACEND and CDR during the summer months when a program director is on a nine-month contract. This could be the director who is checking their calls and emails during the summer or someone, such as a secretary, who is assigned to check these for the director.

Question: Under Standard 6 in the draft 2017 Standards, what is the difference between learning outcomes and competencies?

ACEND Response: Standard 6 indicates that programs must develop a student learning outcomes assessment plan that includes the learning activities that will be used to assure the achievement of the required knowledge and/or competencies. The required knowledge and competencies are included in Standard 5. Programs identify the learning activities they will use to assure that the knowledge and competencies have been achieved and the data collection that will be done.

Question: My program assessment report (PAR) is due in 2018, which set of standards should I use?

ACEND Response: Although the actual date for implementation of the 2017 Standards will be set by the ACEND Board later this summer/fall, ACEND anticipates that the implementation date will be some time in 2017. If the implementation date is set for some time in 2017, then programs with self-study reports or PARs due in 2018 will need to do those reports showing compliance with the 2017 standards.

Question: Many regional accreditors are requiring that those teaching at the master degree level have a degree higher than they are teaching. Will the educators in the future education model master degree nutrition and dietetics programs be able to teach if their highest degree is a master degree? If institutions require PDs to have a terminal degree, will the current pool of PhD RDNs be sufficient to meet the demand?

ACEND Response: ACEND is still developing the standards that will specify the expectations for program directors and faculty in the future education model programs. These standards are expected to be released in the fall of 2016. ACEND's current accreditation standards indicate that faculty and preceptors must meet the institution's requirements for their appointment. Currently almost half (42%) of dietetics education program directors hold a doctoral degree; with university-based DPDs being more likely (57%) than dietetic internships (28%) to have a program director with a doctoral degree.

Question: Under the future education model, is there a possibility for not requiring supervised practice in the bachelor degree so as not to compete with the sites and supervised practice opportunities required for the master degree program?

ACEND Response: ACEND is still finalizing the standards for the future education model associate, bachelor and master degree programs. All will include competencies that graduates will be expected to demonstrate; experiential learning will be needed to help prepare graduates with these competencies. ACEND expects to allow programs flexibility in determining what types of experiential learning they will use to assure students demonstrate the desired competencies.

Question: Will there be a fee for the programs choosing to pilot the new standards (like is required for a substantive change or new program)?

ACEND Response: ACEND has not yet finalized the criteria or the process for the pilot programs. That information is expected to be available early in 2017.