
ACEND® Standards Update

September, 2016

Release of Future Education Model Draft Accreditation Standards

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

the accrediting agency for the
 Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

Future Education Model Draft Standards Released for Public Comment

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND®) Board has released the draft *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Associate, Bachelor and Master Degree Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics* for public comment. These draft standards, which include the expected competencies and performance indicators for each degree level, are available on the ACEND website (www.eatright.org/acend). Also on the website is a webinar describing the development of the standards, competencies and performance indicators. Comments can be provided on the draft standards until November 28, 2016 at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FEMComments>.

Development of the Future Education Model Standards, Competencies and Performance Indicators

In 2012, ACEND began discussions on the education of nutrition and dietetics practitioners and competencies needed for future practice. Major work on ACEND's exploration of future education began in 2013 with the formation of an Expanded Standards Committee and a Visioning Group. The Visioning Group included nutrition and dietetic practitioners from various areas of practice and practitioners from other health professions such as medicine and physical therapy. In February, 2014 the Expanded Standards Committee and the Visioning Group met to begin the future visioning process. Participants at that meeting determined that additional data were needed to help guide decisions for future education in nutrition and dietetics. As a result, much time was spent during the past two years compiling the information needed.

An extensive environmental scan was done and multiple forms of data collection were used to gain stakeholder input. In January 2015, the Expanded Standards Committee and Visioning Group again met to review the data collected and make recommendations to the ACEND board related to future education in nutrition and dietetics. In February 2015, the ACEND Board released a *Rationale Document* (see www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards), which detailed the research that had been done and ACEND's recommendations for future education in nutrition and dietetics at the associate, bachelor and master degree levels. ACEND requested stakeholder input on the recommendations and reviewed more than 7,000 comments received.

ACEND then began work on developing and validating the competencies and performance indicators for each degree level. Under the leadership of consultant Leanne Worsfold, a group of 15 subject matter experts, which included practitioners and educators from across multiple areas of nutrition and dietetics practice, came together for two multi-day work sessions during the summer of 2015 to develop the first draft of the competencies and performance indicators for the associate, bachelor and master degree graduates. In fall 2015, a group of 98 first line reviewers participated in one of 10 online focus groups conducted by consultant Worsfold to review and refine the draft competencies and performance indicators. In spring 2016, consultant Worsfold conducted an online survey of the draft competencies and performance indicators to assess their importance to future practice. More than 1000 practitioners, educators and members of other professions responded. This rigorous process of multiple rounds of development and review by subject matter experts representing a wide range of perspectives of the larger population helped assure that the competencies and performance indicators were representative of the behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities required in future roles in nutrition and dietetics practice.

The ACEND Standards Committee then developed the accreditation standards for these future education model programs. The competencies and performance indicators were incorporated into the appendix of these standards documents.

Next Steps

ACEND will collect stakeholder comments on the draft *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Associate, Bachelor and Master Degree Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics* through an online survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FEMComments>) until November 28, 2016. ACEND will review the comments received, revise the documents as needed and may do a second round for public comment in early 2017 depending on the comments received. ACEND expects to finalize the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards* sometime in 2017 and at that point will do a call for programs to volunteer to serve as demonstration programs under these standards. The process for this application process is still being finalized. ACEND hopes that some of the first cohort of demonstration programs will be accepting students by fall 2018. ACEND will continue to provide updates in the monthly ACEND Standards Newsletter and on the monthly virtual town hall meetings (see www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards for more information).

For Additional Information

- 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 1st Tuesday of each month at 2:00 pm CT; 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: Will ACEND be providing an update on the future education model and allowing time for educator questions on the model at FNCE?

ACEND Response: Updates about the future education model and time for discussion of the model are planned for FNCE this year. At the ACEND Forum, which will be held on Sunday, October 16 at 10:00 am in the convention center, Kathy Creedon, MHPE, RD, LDN, chair of the ACEND Standards Committee, will be providing an update on the work that ACEND has been doing on both the *2017 Accreditation Standards* and the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards*. At that same session, Stephanie Harris, PhD, RDN, LD and Gina Bayless, MS, RDN, LD will share their collaborative work with the Dietetic Internship/Master's Degree Program at Case Western Reserve University and University Hospitals Case Medical Center. ACEND and CDR will host round table discussions in an open session on Monday, October 17 at 11:00 am at the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel to allow time for discussion with educators on any issues of concern, including the future education model. ACEND Staff will be available at the ACEND booth during FNCE to answer questions as well.

Question: Are self-study report templates available for the 2017 Accreditation Standards?

ACEND Response: The templates for the self-study report and other forms needed for completion of a self-study under the *2017 Accreditation Standards* are available on the ACEND website www.eatright.org/acend. ACEND is finalizing its new accreditation software, called Jura, that will be available later this fall and will be used by program directors completing self-studies under the *2017 Accreditation Standards* for site visits starting in fall 2017.

Questions: What is the actual implementation date for the 2017 Accreditation Standards? June 1, 2017 or January 1, 2018 when information is posted to the Jura software.

ACEND Response: The implementation date for the *2017 Accreditation Standards* is June 1, 2017. To verify that programs have implemented the *2017 Accreditation Standards*, programs will be required to post in ACEND's software their curriculum map and student learning outcomes assessment plan based on the *2017 Accreditation Standards*. Because the software is new and program directors will need to complete online training to learn how the software works, ACEND allowed some time (until January 1, 2018) after the implementation date for programs post their information.

Question: Will programs with a site visit in 2019 be required to demonstrate compliance with both the 2012 and 2017 Accreditation Standards?

ACEND Response: Programs with site visits in the fall of 2019 will prepare their self-study under the *2017 Accreditation Standards* and will reflect data for the program since its previous accreditation review. For program objectives or student learning outcomes where data being collected remained the same under both the *2012* and *2017 Accreditation Standards*, data should reflect the entire time period since the last accreditation review. For objectives and student learning outcomes that are new to the *2017 Accreditation Standards*, data collection for those would begin no later than June 1, 2017.

Question: If a program is in a community where a new competency, such as nutrition focused physical exams, is not being conducted by RDNs, how could a program expose interns to that practice and assure they are competent?

ACEND Response: The *2017 Accreditation Standards* allow increased flexibility in supervised practice hours and include simulation as one option for alternative supervised practice experiences. Students could learn/demonstrate competence doing nutrition focused physical exams using simulation. Some programs are hosting one of the Academy's Nutrition Focused Physical Exam workshops for their students/interns, faculty and preceptors as a way to prepare both current students/interns and faculty/preceptors with the competence needed to do nutrition focused physical exams.

Question: KRDN 2.1 states "Demonstrate effective and professional oral and written communication and documentation." Could you provide insight on what is meant by documentation?

ACEND Response: ACEND used the word "documentation" to reflect the types of written work in which outcomes and evidence are recorded in an official way such as detailing nutrition care in the medical record, recording the process and outcomes in a quality improvement project report and reporting the methods and findings of a research study.

Question: Logic was added as a curriculum requirement. Does this mean we need to add a course in logic?

ACEND Response: ACEND expectations for all of the components listed in 5.2a are that the components be addressed somewhere in the curriculum but covering the component does not mean a course is required. ACEND views the concept of logic (i.e. being able to reason, analyze and construct valid arguments) as 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). As long as the concept of logic is covered in a course, which could be a statistics, philosophy, research methods or other course, the program would be meeting that required element; the program would not be expected to add a course in logic.

Questions: Will a program selected to be a demonstration program for the *Standards for the Future Education Model Programs*, be required to be in compliance with the *2017 Accreditation Standards*?

ACEND Response: All currently accredited CP, DI, DPD, DT, FDE, and IDE programs will be expected to come into compliance with the *2017 Accreditation Standards* by June 1, 2017 to maintain their accreditation. ACEND is still finalizing the process and the timeline for the demonstration programs for the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards*. The date for finalizing these Standards will depend in large part on the volume and types of comments received about the draft standards and the number of public comment periods that are held before finalization occurs. If a program is selected as a demonstration program for the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards*, at that point the demonstration program will need to demonstrate compliance with the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards* instead of the *2017 Accreditation Standards*.

Question: Will a program director need to assess all of the competencies and the performance indicators for a Future Education Model degree program?

ACEND Response: The *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Associate, Bachelor and Master Degree Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics* indicate that program directors will need to show, on their curriculum map, where all of the required competencies and performance indicators are being taught (Standard 4, Required Element 4.1). However, program directors will report assessment of the only the required competencies in their Competency Assessment Plan (Standard 5, Required Element 5.1).