Question: Will there be handouts provided?

ACEND Response: Slides are posted on the ACEND 2022 Standards webpage in a pdf file format as full slides.

Question: Is the substantive change fee for changing an undergraduate CP to a masters CPD waived? I noticed it is waived for the DI.

ACEND Response: The Board is discussing waiving the substantive change fee for DI, CP and FDE programs planning to move to the graduate level. We will share the decision with program directors through the ACEND Update.

Question: What is the link to the specific USDE regulation regarding these changes?

ACEND Response: Following are the new USDE regulations of most interest to education programs; https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=1e2be67cd260002f29cebdfc3438381b&mc=true&n=sp34.3.602.b&r=SUBPART&ty=HTML

New Distance Education regulations are found here: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-09-02/pdf/2020-18636.pdf

Questions Related to Standard 1

Adding the Graduate Degree/Accepting Students with a Graduate Degree

Question: Can the DI accept students with graduate degree

ACEND Response: Proposed Required Element 1.4a addresses this point and states that DI programs can decide to accept students with a graduate degree.

Question:

- What if the student would like to pursue a master's degree in another area different from nutrition? For example, an MBA?
- Are MA programs allowable?

ACEND Response: The Standards do not limit the type of master’s degree with which a program may decide to collaborate. The graduate degree may be an MS, MA, MBA, MPH, MCN, or any other graduate degree program.
Question: The standards state that a graduate degree must be completed as part of the program. Can a DI program require students to dually-enroll in both a master’s degree and DI?

ACEND Response: The program must be established to: 1) only accept students with a graduate degree, 2) combine to offer the graduate degree with the DI, 3) or offer both options 1 and 2. Anything else may be determined through the programs’ policy on prior learning assessment. MT what do you think?

Question: Can a student complete the master’s degree concurrently at another institution (not formal affiliation)? Have the DI verification statement provided after both are completed?

ACEND Response: The proposed standards state that a DI can admit individuals with a bachelor’s degree if the program “requires a graduate degree to be completed as part of the program.” The DI program must ensure that the students complete the degree “as part of the program” in order to graduate. The program must demonstrate that it has an arrangement with a graduate program to allow students to complete both DI rotations and the graduate degree. The name of the institution(s), the graduate degree requirements, cost, and other pertinent information must be included in the information to prospective students and the public. As an option, the program may have the students until they complete the graduate degree before they apply to the internship.

Question: What if an intern is enrolled in a master’s program separately from the DI at the same time?

ACEND Response: This option is possible only if the DI program is combined with a graduate degree, but the student requested to enroll in a different graduate program. In this instance, the DI program could allow an intern to enroll in a different graduate program, if the intern chose to do so, but the program must have the second option where the program provides the opportunity to complete a graduate degree. The option for students to find their own grad degree would need to clearly be spelled out in the program’s admission and completion requirements. The program may also choose to have students wait to enroll in the DI until they completed the graduate degree, or the graduate courses may be waived using prior assessed learning. The DI verification statement cannot be granted until the intern completes both the DI and graduate degree requirements.

Question: What is recommended for graduate credit amount

ACEND Response: The length of the graduate program is a decision made by the program while considering state and institutional requirements. Typically, a master’s level program requires at least 30 credits. ACEND asks faculty to keep their programs at a reasonable length to reduce students’ debt and ensure graduates can join the workforce in a timely manner.
Question: How will stand alone DI programs be impacted moving forward with not only the new standards but with the FEM?

ACEND Response: Under the 2022 Accreditation Standards, stand-alone DI programs may continue and must either only accept students with a graduate degree, or they can collaborate with an educational institution to become a graduate level DI program (e.g., MS/DI, MA/DI, MPH/DI, MBA/DI, etc.). If they choose to do so, they can form a partnership with the educational institution under the FEM Standards and reorganize or complete the candidacy process to become a Future Graduate program. Access the ACEND Future Education Model webpage for more information on the application process: [www.eatrightpro.org/futuremodel](http://www.eatrightpro.org/futuremodel)

Question: Will the DI plus graduate credit then be obsolete?

ACEND Response: Under the 2022 Accreditation Standards, DIs will not be able to provide a portion of a graduate program. They must either only accept students with a graduate degree or submit a substantive change to add a graduate degree.

Question: Can any type of master’s degree be acceptable?

ACEND Response: A CP or DI program is able to add any type of graduate degree such as MS, MA, MPH, MBA, EdD or other master’s or doctorate program.

Question: Does it have to be a combined DI/MS? If we have a stand-alone DI and a stand-alone MS, can they be dually matriculated?

ACEND Response: The DI program curriculum does not need to be revised; however, if a DI accepts students with a bachelor’s degree, the program must require the completion of a graduate degree prior to issuing a verification statement to program graduates. The program decides how to structure the curriculum: For example, MPH first, MPH and DI concurrently or MPH last. The curriculum must be set so that students/interns complete the program in a reasonable amount of time.

Question: Is it a major program change to decide to admit only applicants with a masters’ degree as of 2023?

ACEND Response: DI programs that decide to admit only applicants who have completed their graduate degree do not need to submit a substantive program change. Once the Standards are finalized, ACEND will provide guidance on collecting this information from programs.

Question: For those who have free-standing DIs and are considering joining with a graduate program, where would you suggest we start?

ACEND Response: The first steps in the process may be to investigate possible graduate programs that the DI may collaborate with; then, connect with the faculty to explore options and possibilities. Some things to consider are the availability of a local college or university with a graduate degree that could align with your program or, investigating a graduate degree offered via distance education. Programs may search for a webinar from ACEND to assist free-standing DIs through this process.
Question: When a free-standing DI combines with a graduate program at an educational institution, who is the program director in that scenario?

**ACEND Response:** Following the requirements for a consortium (2022 Standards) or partnership (FEM Standards), the program director is decided between the two collaborating institutions. ACEND leaves this decision to the program.

Question: If a DI is offered at a University, can the student take a concurrent MS program at the same University that is not "related" to the DI?

**ACEND Response:** The student is able to take an unrelated master’s program as long as the DI: 1) either accepts the student after completing the graduate degree, or 2) has identified the master’s degree that can be completed along with the internship as this would impact the program length and need to be clearly communicated in the program’s Website information and policies. A substantive program change request with this information would need to be submitted for approval by ACEND.

Question: A stand-alone DI can still just provide an optional MS track but not require it? Or does the DI have to combine with a graduate school program?

**ACEND Response:** After December 31, 2024, the graduate track is not optional; any intern entering the program without a graduate degree would need to complete one prior to receiving a verification statement.

Question: What would be an option for students who already have a MS or even a PhD but need supervised practice and a verification statement to sit for the RD exam?

**ACEND Response:** Through a prior learning assessment policy, a graduate CP or DI program can accept students with a graduate degree to complete the supervised practice portion of the program.

Questions:

- Would a university have to have 2 tracks to accept interns with a grad degree and interns who need to take the MS classes? How does that work?
- I understood that if a program accepts a student that already holds a graduate degree, that student can only go for supervised practice and get the verification statement. But at the same time, you answered that a stand-alone DI cannot continue to exist providing an optional MS track, it would have to be required. Can you please clarify?
- For interns coming in with a MS will that be 1 track and then our interns who will do the combined DI with a MS, is that a 2nd track?
- Can our DI program have both a graduate level dietetic internship AND a stand-alone DI track?

**ACEND Response:** A DI may decide to have two tracks; however, if a DI decides to add the graduate degree, it will only need to have the one track and establish a prior learning assessment policy to accept students with a graduate degree. These students will only have to complete the supervised practice portion of the program to obtain the verification statement.
Question: Can you confirm the need for students to complete a DPD program and obtaining a DPD Verification Statement as a prerequisite for entering an MS-DI program

ACEND Response: This requirement has not changed. A DI program must admit only individuals who have a verification statement from a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) or Foreign Dietitian Education program (FDE).

Question: Can students be earning the DPD at the graduate level while completing the DI?

ACEND Response: A DI program must admit only individuals who have completed all Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) requirements and received the DPD verification statement.

Question: If an international student wants to go home to their country and we have an affiliation agreement in place the student can complete all supervised practice hours outside the US in a Grad CP program.

ACEND Response: The 2022 Standards do not put a limit on the number of supervised practice hours completed outside the United States and its territories.

Question: Is there a recency requirement to the MS degree for those stand-alone DI programs who would like to provide credit for their already having an MS degree?

ACEND Response: ACEND has not set a requirement for recency of course credits nor experience. This is a program and/or institution decision.

Question: Would ACEND consider letting new programs add a second track to start a DI/MS before full accreditation?

ACEND Response: Candidacy programs are able to submit a change to meet the new graduate degree requirement. In instances when a program offers two tracks, the non-degree track would need to admit applicants that already have a graduate degree.

Questions Specific to ISPPs

Question: If the program also has an ISPP, will they have to adjust the ISPP to meet that standard?

ACEND Response: ISPPs must come into compliance with the DI Standards and combine with a graduate degree or accept students with a graduate degree.

Question: Are ISPP Programs held to the standards of DI?

ACEND Response: ISPPs must follow the DI Standards. This will be clarified in the 2022 Standards Guidance Information Document.

Defining “Reasonable Time” and Program Length

Question: "Reasonable time" - can you clarify that again? If the student finishes the DI portion first, what is reasonable to then wrap up the MS?

ACEND Response: A reasonable amount of time may be the length of the graduate degree. Ideally, the graduate degree should be completed at the same time of the supervised practice portion of the DI or shortly thereafter. This would ensure students are able to complete their education in a timely manner. Typically, most ACEND accredited full-time graduate DIs are no more than two years in length.
Question: Has consideration been given to setting a maximum amount of time for DI graduates to complete the masters after completing their rotations, such as one year?

ACEND Response: The ACEND standards (RE 8.2m in the proposed 2022 Standards) state that a program must determine the maximum amount of time allowed for completing program requirements applicable at the time intern enrolls. This would include both completion of the degree and supervised practice requirements. The ACEND Board has not set a maximum amount of time to complete the graduate degree; however, ACEND’s legal counsel has indicated that a “reasonable time frame” is close to one year but also depends on the length of the graduate program. For example, a 45-credit MPH program may take longer than one-year; in this instance, reasonable amount of time may be 1.5 years.

Questions: A graduate degree with DI or an ISPP would require at least two years to complete. Would 150% time apply to this?

ACEND Response: That is correct. A combined program that is two years-long would calculate 150% time as three years. A program that is three years long would have a 150% time of 4.5 years.

Question: Are we required to decrease the hours of our program?

ACEND Response: Programs are not required to decrease their program hours; however, they are encouraged to review the hours and ensure they are not unnecessarily holding interns/students from completing the program in a timely fashion. Deciding not to establish a policy for prior assessed learning, making students repeat courses they have recently completed, and unnecessarily increasing the length of a program (credits and/or supervised practice hours), all have the unintended consequences of increasing cost of education and student debt, keeping students from graduating in time, and preventing graduates from joining the workforce sooner.

Questions:

- To clarify, until 2022, the length of the supervised practice will need to continue to meet at least 1200 hours?
- We have a 2-year CP. Students who started this fall will graduate in August 2022. Does this mean they fall under the reduced required hours?

ACEND Response: During the COVID emergency, the ACEND Board voted to temporarily reduce the required number of supervised practice hours from 1200 hours to 1000 hours for programs leading to the RDN credential (DI/CP/IDE/FDE/DPD with ISPP) and 375 hours for DT programs. The temporary reduction applies to all students/interns who complete the program anytime between January 1, 2020 and June 30, 2022.
Questions:

- The length of the program should reflect the time it will take to complete both the DI and the MS classes?
- If that is the case, a student really needs to be full time and not part time for the masters

**ACEND Response:** The length of the program should reflect the time it will take to complete both the DI and the graduate degree. As is with the current standards, the time is adjusted for part-time students.

**Question:** How will eliminating the 900 hours requirement for IDE programs affect licensure and certification requirements to practice in many states?

**ACEND Response:** In the proposed 2022 Standards, the IDE program type is incorporated within the CP Standards. International programs (IDE programs in the 2017 Standards) must follow all the requirements within the CP Standards including completing a minimum of 1000 hours in supervised practice experiences. The CDR Board voted in June 2020 to remove the requirement for international students to complete 900 hours of their supervised practice in the United States. International students are now able to complete all their supervised practice hours in their home country and sit for the RDN exam.

*Timeline for Coming into Compliance with the 2022 Standards*

**Questions:**

- If a non-MS holding intern completes their internship in early to mid-2023, they would not be able to sit for their exam since they don't have their Master’s degree by the time they finished their supervised practice- or would they be alright since it is before Jan 1, 2024 and they'd have time to take their exam before that deadline?
- Is the graduate degree requirement applicable for the class of 2022?
- For students starting fall 2021 and graduating spring 2022 will they need to have a master’s degree before earning the verification statement?

**ACEND Response:** Per CDR, as long as the program director inputs the graduate’s documentation into the REPS system by December 31, 2023, then the graduate will be able to take the RDN exam without the master’s degree.

**Question:**

- However, to be compliant with the 2022 ACEND standards, we need to admit only those with MS degrees by June 1, 2022, correct?
- The Standards would be mandatory for adoption by summer of 2022, but the transition for DI programs to include a graduate degree isn’t mandatory until 12/31/23?

**ACEND Response:** RE 1.4b for the CP Standards and RE 1.4d in the DI Standards indicate that programs must meet the requirement on or before December 31, 2023. Therefore, to be compliant with the 2022 ACEND standards, programs must admit only those with MS degrees by December 31, 2023, if programs decide to choose this option.
Question:

- What date will the 2022 Standards be required to be implemented with the graduate degree if our entry point for the internship is always at the beginning of a Fall semester?
- I want to make sure I’m clear on timeline for implementation of the 2022 standards. The

ACEND Response: For a program with a Fall start date, the latest implementation deadline of the graduate degree would be Fall 2023. Before the Fall 2023 start, the program must have submitted the substantive change to add the graduate degree and secured approval from the ACEND Board. All students entering the program by Fall 2023 must either already have a graduate degree or be expected to complete the graduate degree to obtain a verification statement. When determining when to add this requirement you may take into consideration the length of your program so you can be sure that all interns with only an undergraduate degree complete program requirements and are submitted to CDR for exam eligibility by December 31, 2023.

Question: As of December 31, 2023, a bachelor’s level CP should move to offering a graduate degree and submit a program substantial change to ACEND?

ACEND Response: The substantive change to move a program to the graduate level must be submitted to ACEND prior to December 31, 2023 to ensure the program change is approved on or before December 31, 2023. When planning for submitting the change, consider when you want to admit your first class of students into the graduate CP and work backward from there. Typically, it may take up to three months for the graduate degree to be approved by ACEND so this needs to be considered as well. We urge programs to ensure that all students/interns graduating after December 31, 2023 have a graduate degree and can sit for the RDN exam. Therefore, when determining when to add this requirement take into consideration the length of your program so you can be sure that all students/interns with only an undergraduate degree complete program requirements and are submitted to CDR for exam eligibility by December 31, 2023.

Question: When can programs choose to move to the 2022 standards?

ACEND Response: The final 2022 Standards are expected to be released in summer 2021. At this time, they will be available for voluntary adoption by programs. Programs must come into compliance with the 2022 Standards beginning starting June 1, 2022.

Questions Related to All Standards

Distance Education Requirements

Question: With regards to strengthened requirements for distance education - does that mean for the didactic component of programs or the SPE or both?

ACEND Response: Programs must follow the requirements for both didactic distance education and remote supervised practice. In distance and remote environments, adequate resources must be available, faculty must be trained on the distance environment and they must ensure regular and substantive interactions with students.
Question: Our university has program for instructors to attend distance training certification, I'm assuming that training would meet the requirements?

ACEND Response: Such trainings are sufficient to meet the requirement.

Program Concentration

Question: Regarding concentrations - will it continue for the master’s programs since that is Advanced practice?

ACEND Response: The master’s program becomes the entry-level into dietetics and will not be considered advanced practice. Programs can choose to add a concentration to their MS program, but this will no longer be an ACEND requirement.

Question: Would removing concentration from the CP or DI Program require substantial change?

ACEND Response: Once programs adopt the 2022 Standards, removing a concentration will not constitute a major program change. No paperwork will need to be submitted to ACEND.

Question: Why are we removing concentration and requiring a graduate degree?

ACEND Response: The graduate degree was added as a requirement in response to CDR’s January 1, 2024 graduate degree eligibility requirement to sit for the RDN exam based on the advice of ACEND’s legal counsel. With the addition of a graduate degree, a concentration is no longer needed, although programs can choose to have a concentration.

Question: Under the 2022 Standards, will DI programs be required to eliminate concentrations?

ACEND Response: DI programs will not be required to eliminate their current concentration nor add new ones. The ACEND Standards establish minimum requirements for quality education. Going above and beyond the Standards is always encouraged. DI programs can choose to have a concentration, but this will not be included as part of ACEND’s review process.

Question: Will the concentrations still be listed on ACEND/applicant guide?

ACEND Response: The content of the Applicant Guide is an NDEP decision.

Student Learning Assessment and SLO Plan

Question: What will the new Student Learning Assessment tool include?

ACEND Response: The assessment tool has not been finalized; however, we anticipate that it will be similar to the Competency Assessment Table requirement in the Future Education Model Standards.

Question: Will candidacy programs not be assessed on the current SLOs if the site visit is in 2022?

ACEND Response: Programs with a site visit in 2022 follow the new 2022 Standards; however, they must demonstrate that ongoing program assessment has occurred during the previous accreditation cycle. This will require the program to show their SLO evaluation plan based on the 2017 Standards.
Question: Does that mean if our next accreditation visit is in 2022 and we move to the new standards we would still need to show the learning outcomes table from the 2017 standards?

ACEND Response: That is correct.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Question: If the University already has adopted an equitable treatment policy, does a DPD program need to do the same?

ACEND Response: Programs are always encouraged to follow their institutional policies.

Question:

- As a minority-serving institution, I want to encourage ACEND to recognize that requiring the additional graduate coursework requirement will make it more difficult for our diverse candidates to pursue the RDN credential given the challenges of enrollment and cost factors, which is counter-productive to our goal to increase the diversity of the field.
- Will the cost of a master’s degree decrease student diversity?

ACEND Response: Currently, the proportion of underrepresented minorities (URM) students in ACEND accredited master’s level CPs (range = 22%-26% for the past 5 years) is the same or better than the proportion of URM in bachelor’s level CPs (18%-26%). This is consistent with other health professions, such as pharmacy and physical therapy, that experienced an increase in diversity of their student body after moving to the graduate level. This is in contrast to the proportion of URM in DI programs which is 8%-9% lower than that of DPD programs. ACEND will continue to monitor and evaluate diversity in our programs.

Question:

- How can DI programs control the diversity of their interns as they use a match process and ultimately have no control over who is selected?
- Is decrease in diversity due to cost problems?
- Our DI pays a stipend/charges no fee or tuition, and we still end up with a largely white female class. How could that be?

ACEND Response: Evidence points to a number of barriers faced by students, cost being only one of the many barriers. Any step in the process may cause a challenge for applying and/or matching to a DI program. These include: Insufficient support and advising (DPD and DI levels), poor outreach, lack of funds and scholarships, cost of the application, completing the application itself, application requirements such as GREs or volunteer expectations, and others. Every step may be a potential barrier that deters students, especially under-represented minorities and first-generation college students. Programs are urged to review their policies and activities with diversity, equity and inclusion in mind.
Question: Will ACEND or the Academy provide a toolkit with possible learning assessment examples for educators to help us with KRDNs 2.6 and 2.7 please?

ACEND Response: ACEND is currently working with Diversify Dietetics, NOBIDAN members, and other experts on diversity, equity and inclusion to provide a series of webinars and resources for faculty and students.

Question: For standard 5.2, our university has training/webinar on diversity and equity, but faculty are encouraged but not required to attend. Or are faculty teaching in the DPD classes required to complete those training?

ACEND Response: All faculty (within the academic unit) must receive a training to recognize biases in self and others and reduce instances of intentional and unintentional microaggressions, oppression and discrimination.

Question: Should all faculty receive diversity, equity and inclusion training or only the DPD/DI/CP/DT/FDE faculty?

ACEND Response: All faculty within the academic unit must receive the training on diversity, equity and inclusion. Faculty within the academic unit means only those teaching in the ACEND-accredited program.

Question: How frequently should diversity and equity training of faculty occur?

ACEND Response: The frequency of the diversity, equity and inclusion training is decided by the program and the institution. The program must show evidence that the frequency of the trainings for new and current faculty is adequate and meets the needs of the program and its students.

Question: Is diversity, equity and inclusion training for all faculty who teach general classes also required to be taken by our students?

ACEND Response: It is up to the program to decide how to train students on diversity, equity and inclusion to meet the ACEND Core Knowledge and Competencies on this topic.

Questions: The new standards still do not ask how existing program will support students of color with graduate degree requirement, such as financial support, and to remove GRE requirement that causes another barrier.

ACEND Response: Programs must meet Required Elements 7.1 and 8.1e in the proposed 2022 Standards to ensure that admission and retention policies are addressing the needs of a diverse student body.

Question: Why isn't 3.3c a CRDN?

ACEND Response: Required Element 3.3 addresses the learning activities used in the curriculum. Required Element 3.3c ensures that programs develop their learning activities with diversity, equity and inclusion in mind.
Additional Questions

Question: Do we have to still report faculty qualifications? Do we have to report data from each year or just what is current at time of self-study?

ACEND Response: Faculty qualifications must be reported to ACEND. This information is collected in the self-study report.

Question: How do we determine that a preceptor is a role model? Are their guidelines for that?

ACEND Response: ACEND expects program directors and faculty to use their professional judgement and expertise to assess the quality education and mentorship that a preceptor provides. Programs may be able to discern much of this information from their preceptor qualifications. Preceptors qualified for a role should be able to serve as mentors for that role. After initial vetting and selection of the preceptor, the program’s outcome assessment plan should include, at a minimum, evaluation of the preceptor by interns and informs the program about the continued qualifications of that preceptor.

Question: Has the requirement for a DPD to have an experiential policy been removed from the 2022 Standards?

ACEND Response: The 2017 Standard do not require DPDs to have any experiential learning. However, in the 2017 Standards if a DPD chooses to add experiential learning, the program must comply with the requirements detailed in Standard 8. In the proposed 2022 Standards, DPDs will no longer be asked to comply with Standard 6, even if they incorporated experiential learning.

Question: What are you considering global nutrition?

ACEND Response: Global nutrition addresses nutritional status and determinants of health worldwide. A definition will be added to the glossary of terms in the Guidance Information Document.

Question: Will DICAS still be used for the match?

ACEND Response: There are no plans to stop the use of DICAS.

FEM Programs

Question: Will any of these changes eventually impact/change the FEM standards?

ACEND Response: The Standards Committee will begin revisions of the FEM Standards in Spring 2022. Several changes proposed in the 2022 Standards will be applied to the FEM Standards. As an example, strengthening the distance education requirements will be incorporated based on new USDE regulation.
NDEP-Related Questions

Question: Can race and ethnicity be added to the DICAS application form?

ACEND Response: ACEND will bring this request to the Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) DICAS Supervised Practice Program (NDEP’s DSPP) task force.

January 1, 2024 Graduate Degree Requirement Addressed to CDR

As our educators are fully aware, ACEND cannot speak for CDR. Any public comments made in the survey addressing CDR’s graduate degree requirement will be shared with CDR.

- Is there any probability of CDR going back and not requiring a masters in 2024? I'm seeing a petition go around trying to get that stopped so that it's not an additional barrier to the field.
- Piggybacking on CDR questions-In so many virtual conferences the conversation with DEI/BIPOC lack of resources/opportunities within our profession - will CDR go back?
- Is there evidence to support a mandate that all DI programs require a master's degree upon completion? There is no evidence to support the CDR mandate.
- Has the CDR considered the impact of this requirement upon programs who enroll higher numbers of low-income students who find it challenging to afford additional master's level coursework?
- Does USDE understand that the CDR mandate is not supported by credible, outcomes research-based data?
- A graduate degree requirement is the main reason to increase student debt
- Does CDR understand that a master's degree could and likely will be a road block for diverse RDNs