

**Best wishes from ACEND for a productive and rewarding year in 2017.**

### **Associate Degree Graduates**

Many have asked for further clarification about the potential roles and job opportunities for graduates for the future education model programs. This month's update features a more expanded description of the skills and job roles for those graduating from the future education model associate degree programs.

Job settings and positions for the associate degree prepared practitioner, termed a Nutrition Health Worker, primarily focus on working as part of a team with individuals in their homes and in community settings to address social determinants of health, support individual's progress towards wellness, and assist with healthcare navigation and patient education. Services performed by the Nutrition Health Worker working in community health agencies, social service agencies or for healthcare organizations include: Collecting data and assisting with screening (e.g. home environment, weight, activity level, blood glucose); providing assistance to clients/participants in label reading, food selection, and food preparation; helping keep clients/participants out of the hospital by supporting regular visits to their primary physician and reporting observations to care team; engaging clients/participants to help manage their care and stay compliant with their care plan, providing client/participant education using predefined and pre-developed learning plans and education materials and assisting with community events such as health fairs and farmer's markets.

Nutrition Health Workers will work under the supervision of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN), Registered Nurses (RNs), Physicians and/or other community health practitioners. The skill set for Nutrition Health Workers includes the communication, interpersonal and collaboration skills needed to work with culturally diverse clients and health team members, the basic food and nutrition knowledge to assist clients in their daily food selection and preparation, and the ability to integrate knowledge of determinants of health into all aspects of nutrition care and services.

Nutrition Health Workers are expected to support and educate clients/participants in nutrition, food preparation, medication management and adherence, exercise, health care system navigation, and health topics such as substance use; participate in the development of individual goal plans with the client and their medical team and support the clients/participants to reduce barriers and achieve goals; provide support and notify clinical team and program manager regarding changes in: behaviors, nutrition, exercise, substance use, medication adherence, and other issues as related to the established care plans; collect and report specific nutrition, health, behavioral and social information to healthcare team; help coordinate client/participant transportation and accompaniment as needed, to scheduled appointments; bridge community, cultural, linguistic and educational and other barriers to encourage self-care and participation in community events such as health fairs and farmer's markets.

### ***RATIONALE DOCUMENT UPDATED!***

ACEND has updated the *Rationale Document* with a summary of the review of the 2012 Accreditation Standards and the development of the competencies for the future education model associate, bachelor and master degree programs. The revised document will be available soon on the ACEND Standards Website at [www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards](http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards)

## For Additional Information

- Review back issues of the monthly ACEND Standards Updates that are posted on the ACEND Standards Committee Website [www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards](http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards).
- Participate in a monthly ACEND virtual town hall on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards).
- Review FAQ for the *Future Education Model Standards* posted on the ACEND Standards Committee website [www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards](http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards)
- Contact ACEND (acend@eatright.org; 312-899-4872).

## Questions That Have Come to ACEND

This section includes questions that have been raised on town hall meetings, on phone calls or through emails and ACEND's response to each.

**Question:** *Do the required components listed in Standard 5 of the 2017 Standards each need to be a separate course?*

**ACEND Response:** The required components listed in Standard 5 of the 2017 Standards do not need to be separate courses. The content needs to be included somewhere in the curriculum but where and how it is covered and to what depth is determined by the program. The course(s) that cover the required components is identified in the curriculum map.

**Question:** *If a nutrition and dietetics program is accredited until fall of 2021, will the program need to implement the 2017 Standards by June 1, 2017 or will they have until 2021 when they submit their self-study to come into compliance?*

**ACEND Response:** All currently ACEND-accredited nutrition and dietetics programs, regardless of when their accreditation term ends, are expected to come into compliance with the 2017 Standards by June 1, 2017.

**Question:** *When will nutrition and dietetics program directors enter their annual report in the new Jura software?*

**ACEND Response:** ACEND anticipates that by fall of 2017 all accredited programs will enter their annual report in the new Jura software.

**Question:** *What is covered in the program director workshop offered by ACEND?*

**ACEND Response:** The ACEND program director workshops are designed to help program directors explain the purpose of accreditation to their program's stakeholders, analyze their program to determine compliance with the 2017 ACEND accreditation standards, prepare a self-study report or program assessment report using the ACEND templates and identify the steps and requirements to host and effectively participate in the site visit process.

**Question:** *How many individuals provided comments to ACEND about the future education model and what will be done with those comments?*

**ACEND Response:** ACEND has received input in their online survey from more than 1000 nutrition and dietetics program directors, practitioners, educators, employers, students and other healthcare practitioners. In addition several hundred individuals provided comments at the Educator Round Table at FNCE and several organizational groups submitted comments on behalf of their group. ACEND worked with consultant, Leanne Worsfold to summarize ratings and comments and identify themes in the input received. The Standards committee will review all of the comments and the summary report and discuss possible changes for the draft standards. The *Rationale Document* will be updated with a summary of the input received.

**Question:** *The competencies for the future education model master degree program are preparing graduates for a higher level of practice; is it realistic to achieve all of those competencies in a two year program?*

**ACEND Response:** The *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards* for master degree programs identify the competencies required of graduates of that program. Programs are allowed to determine the prerequisites for students to enter their program and could require coursework or experiences that demonstrate some of those competencies be achieved prior to entering the program.

**Question: Why are concentrations not required in the Future Education Model Accreditation Standards?**

**ACEND Response:** The draft *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards* are preparing graduates with a higher level of skills across various areas of practice. Because many of these skills are new, ACEND did not want to overburden programs with the expectation that they needed to go beyond these competencies with a concentration. However, although the draft *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards* do not include the expectation that programs will have a concentration, programs can still have a concentration, if they choose.

**Question: What is the basis for the 450 hours of experiential learning for the Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for the bachelor degree?**

**ACEND Response:** The *Future Education Model* bachelor degree program is designed to prepare nutrition and dietetic technicians, registered for a higher level of practice. Because nutrition and dietetic technician programs at the associate degree level currently are required to include 450 hours of supervised practice, that same hour requirement was kept when elevating the program to the bachelor level.

**Question: Has an environmental scan of the possible positions for the proposed future education model associate degree practitioner been conducted?**

**ACEND Response:** The ACEND Rationale Document (available at [www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards](http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards)) includes results of both the environmental scan of future practice in nutrition and dietetics and the focus group research project conducted on the associate degree prepared nutrition health worker.

**Question: What impact will the recommended future education model have on the cost of education for future students who want to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN)?**

**ACEND Response:** Currently most students spend at least five years to prepare to become an RDN. Nearly half of students completing coordinated programs and 20% of students completing dietetic internships currently are paying tuition to complete a concurrent master degree program, another 25% of internship students are paying tuition to earn some graduate credit with the internship and many go on to complete their graduate degree. Less than 10% of students who complete an internship do not pay at least some tuition/fees to attend that internship. The exact cost of future education model programs is not yet known as demonstration programs have not yet been identified, but the cost of requiring a master degree for entry-level practice may not exceed what students are currently paying to complete a master degree in a coordinated program or with a dietetic internship.

**Question: Are there sufficient doctoral prepared faculty to implement the future education model?**

**ACEND Response:** Currently about 60% of directors of didactic programs in nutrition and dietetics, 50% of directors of coordinated programs and 30% of directors of nutrition and dietetic internships hold a doctoral degree. Nearly 75% of universities sponsoring DPD programs also offer a master's degree program in a nutrition and dietetics-related field and have doctoral prepared faculty teaching in those programs. ACEND believes these numbers should provide sufficient faculty to launch the demonstration master degree programs under the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards*. Data collected from demonstration programs will include availability of resources such as doctoral prepared faculty. These data will help inform ACEND about resources available for full implementation of the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards*.