
Competency-Based Education Programs – Benefits to Students:

- The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) has released the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Graduate Programs (GP) in Nutrition and Dietetics*, which are competency-based education (CBE) programs that integrate classroom learning with hands-on supervised experiential learning activities.
- Nutrition and Dietetics is joining other health professions that have transitioned to CBE model, such as physical therapy, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, audiology, nursing and pharmacy.
- One of the advantages of CBE is that it fosters work readiness. In the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards*, the curriculum is guided with the competencies and their respective performance indicators, which are clearly defined based on the desired behaviors and job skills targeted.
- Employers see potential value in job applicants who study using CBE since it aligns academics with the skills they seek in their employees.
- Students completing *Future Education Model* programs can provide employers with functional resumes that define in-depth skills they will have and indicating they are competent at performing those skills when they enter the workplace.
- Similar to a graduate nutrition and dietetics coordinated program (CP), the new standards' one-step approach to complete educational requirements versus the most common dietetics two-step process will yield additional benefits to students including:
 - Guaranteed ability to sit for the registration exam once the *Future Education Program* is successfully completed. In the most common dietetics education model, students usually need to competitively apply to a supervised practice program after earning their degree; the current low acceptance rate into supervised practice programs means there is no guarantee of being able to sit for the registration exam in the current two-step approach;
 - Decrease in expenses due to enrollment in a single program versus enrollment in two programs; and,
 - Potential ability to complete program in less time because classroom learning and supervised experiential learning are integrated into a single program.
- Results of preliminary qualitative data collected by ACEND from current FEM programs reveal additional tangible benefits to *Future Education Model* programs, such as:
 - *Future Education Model* programs are flexible because they allow students to learn at their own pace. Students who are advanced in an area can progress more quickly or be offered advanced activities.
 - Better preparation of students for the future of dietetics practice by including enhanced competencies (competencies that are set for a higher level of practice compared to those included in current dietetics education programs).
 - CBE training is engaging because the education includes both classroom learning and supervised experiential learning at the same time, making the content more relevant and helping students more quickly make the connection between theory and practice; the integration of practical skills with didactic knowledge allows for greater retention of those skills.

Communication:

- Please contact ACEND at 1-800-877-1600 ext. 5400 or futuremodel@eatright.org with questions.

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