

# ACEND Accreditation Standards

## For Nutrition and Dietetics Supervised Practice Experience Programs (SPE)

[Formerly known as Dietetic Internship (DI)]

Adopted August 1, 2026; Effective August 1, 2027

**Accreditation Council  
for Education in  
Nutrition and Dietetics**

the accrediting agency for the  
Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics



June 1, 2026

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Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190  
Chicago, IL 60606-6995

Phone: 312/899-0040 X 5400  
Fax: 312/899-4817

Email: [ACEND@eatright.org](mailto:ACEND@eatright.org)  
URL: [www.eatright.org/ACEND](http://www.eatright.org/ACEND)

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Supervised Practice Experience (SPE) programs are also known as Dietetic Internship (DI) programs.

When combined with an ACEND-approved Graduate Degree Program, the Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Supervised Practice Experience Programs (SPE) lead to eligibility to take the Commission on Dietetic Registration's examination for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist credential.

## **Standard 1: Program Characteristics and Resources**

**Programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND®) must meet requirements including quality-assurance or oversight by other agencies, organizational structure, financial stability, sufficient resources, the awarding of degrees and/or verification statements, program length, and program leadership.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 1.1** The program must be housed in a college or university, health care facility, federal or state agency, or offered in a consortium with a college or university, health care facility, federal or state agency.
- a. A consortium is defined as two or more independent institutions working together under a formal written agreement to sponsor a single program. The consortium must consider itself a single education program.
  - b. Colleges and universities located in the U.S. or its territories must be accredited in good standing by a U.S. institutional accrediting body for higher education recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) or by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Colleges and universities that are not part of the U.S.-based educational system must be authorized under applicable law by the country's ministry of education or equivalent public entity to provide an educational program beyond secondary education (see Appendix B).
  - c. For programs located outside a college or university, the sponsoring institution must be authorized or exempt under applicable state law to provide postsecondary education.
  - d. Hospitals must be accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC), Det Norske Veritas (DNV), Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP), or other approved national accreditation organization or state agency.
  - e. Facilities for individuals with developmental disabilities must be accredited by the Council on Quality and Leadership in Support for People with Disabilities or by TJC, DNV, HFAP, or other approved national accreditation organization or state agency.
  - f. Other health-care-related facilities and government agencies must be licensed or authorized by a federal agency or an agency of the state in which it is located or accredited by TJC, DNV, HFAP, or other approved national accreditation organization.
  - g. Publicly or privately held corporations of health systems (e.g., hospitals, rehabilitation centers, etc.) and existing ACEND-accredited business entities without oversight by one of the regulatory bodies listed above must meet all the requirements below:
    1. Be legally organized and authorized to conduct business by the appropriate state agency for a minimum of five years
    2. Be in compliance with all local, state and federal laws and regulations
    3. Provide statements covering the past five years from a licensed public accountant that indicate a review of the company's financial statements shows no irregularities and a positive net worth
    4. Have an entity external to the program that provides oversight for the program's operations.
- 1.2** The program must be integrated within the administrative structure of the sponsoring organization, show the structure, such as in an organizational chart, and indicate where the program will be housed. In a consortium, an organizational chart must clearly show the relationship of each member of the consortium to the program and where the program will be housed.
- 1.3** The program must demonstrate that it has:

- a. Support of the upper-level administration
- b. Adequate resources to accomplish its mission and goals and meet the needs of students. Resources must include:
  - 1. Clerical or other staff
  - 2. Technical support
  - 3. Learning resources
  - 4. Physical facilities
  - 5. Support services
- c. Sufficient financial resources to support program needs:
  - 1. The program must describe how the program director provides input into the budgeting process, ensuring sufficient resources to achieve the program's short- and long-term goals
  - 2. Programs offered in a consortium must clearly define the financial and other resource contributions of each member to the total program
- d. Adequate technology and resources to support a distance-learning environment if any portion of the program is offered through distance education
- e. Adequate resources to support continued development and training for program faculty, preceptors, and staff
- f. Sufficient supervised practice sites available to provide the quality, quantity, and variety of expected experiences to prepare students for their roles and responsibilities as nutrition and dietetics professionals
- g. The program must report its maximum enrollment to ensure quality, viability, and appropriate use of resources.

**1.4** The program must:

- a. Be a post-baccalaureate program that:
  - 1. Admits only individuals with a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) verification statement, and the program is affiliated with a degree-granting bridge approved by ACEND to ensure students complete the ACEND-required academic competencies and performance indicators by the end of the program. The bridge graduate degree must be in a major course of study in human nutrition, food and nutrition, dietetics, public health, food systems management, or equivalent
 and/or
  - 2. Admits only individuals with a DPD verification statement and have earned, or are in the process of earning, at least a master's degree granted by a U.S. accredited college/university, or international degree equivalent, and verification of the designated academic competencies and performance indicators by ACEND or an ACEND-accredited Coordinated Program (CP)
- b. Award a verification statement to individuals who have earned a graduate degree, obtained a verification for the designated academic competencies and performance indicators, and completed program requirements.

**1.5** The program must have one designated program director who has primary responsibility for the program and communication with ACEND. The program director must have the authority, responsibility, and sufficient time allocated to manage the program, and provide effective leadership for the program, the program faculty, and the students. The program director may have other responsibilities that do not compromise the ability to lead the program. Responsibilities and time allocation for program leadership are reflected in a formal position description for the program director and approved by an administrator or external entity.

- a. For programs offered in a consortium:

1. One individual must serve as the consortium program director and have primary responsibility for the program and communications with ACEND
  2. Each member organization in the consortium must designate a coordinator (who may be the program director) for the program within that organization who is employed by the organization.
- b. The program director's responsibilities must include, but are not limited to:
1. Authority for oversight of the program, including when program management responsibilities are delegated to other faculty or individuals
  2. Provision or delegation of responsibilities to ensure year-round coverage of the director's responsibilities in the absence of the director or in cases where the director's full-time appointment does not cover 12 months
  3. Development of policies and procedures for effectively leading all components of the program and ensuring fair and considerate treatment of prospective and enrolled students (such as program admission, retention, and completion policies)
  4. Authority to evaluate and manage the financial resources to achieve the program's outcomes and to support the academic integrity and continued viability of the program
  5. Student recruitment, advisement, evaluation, and counseling
    - a. During all stages of the recruitment process, program directors must comply with the Traffic Rules of the Dietetics Application Process
  6. Maintenance of program accreditation, including:
    - a. Timely submission of fees, reports, and requests for major program changes
    - b. Maintenance of the program's student records, including student advising plans, supervised practice hours, and verification statements
    - c. Maintenance of complaints about the program received from students or others, including disposition of the complaint
    - d. Ongoing review of the program's curriculum to meet the accreditation standards
    - e. Communication and coordination with program faculty, preceptors, and others involved with the program and its students
    - f. Facilitation of processes for continuous program evaluation
    - g. Timely submission of required documentation supporting the graduate's eligibility for a Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) credentialing exam
    - h. Completion of an ACEND training on the accreditation standards within one year of hire and every five years, thereafter.
- c. The program director must:
1. Have earned at least a master's degree
  2. Be credentialed as a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) by the Commission on Dietetic Registration or for international programs only, the country's professional association or regulatory board for nutrition or dietetics, if applicable (Appendix B)
  3. Have a minimum of three years of professional experience post-dietetics credentialing
  4. Be a full-time employee of the sponsoring institution as defined by the institution, or a full-time employee of another organization that has been contracted by the sponsoring institution
  5. Not direct another ACEND-accredited nutrition and dietetics education program.
- d. Institutional policies related to workload are applied to the program in a manner that recognizes and supports the academic and practice aspects of the nutrition and dietetics program, including allocating time and/or

reducing teaching load for leadership functions provided by the director. Time release may be distributed among other qualified individuals

1. For programs with a maximum enrollment greater than 5 students, there is a required minimum FTE allotment that must be devoted to program leadership based on total annual approved maximum enrollment (full- and part-time):
  - a. Between 6 to 10 students = 0.5 FTE or greater
  - b. Add 0.1 FTE or greater for each additional 2 students.

**1.6** The program must establish its length and provide the rationale for the program's length, considering the required supervised practice needed by students to demonstrate the required competencies and mandates from the program's institution and state regulation.

- a. The program must be planned so that students complete at least 1000 hours of supervised practice experiences with a minimum of 700 hours in professional work settings; the remaining hours may be in alternate supervised experiences that closely mimic real-world experiences.
  1. For U.S.-based programs, at least 700 of the supervised practice hours must be conducted in a work setting in the United States or its territories, possessions (including the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands), military bases, or in an ACEND-accredited international Coordinated Program (CP).
  2. Supervised practice hours completed during the Diet Technician Option of the Associate Program may be assessed for prior learning.
- b. The program must document the planned hours in professional work settings and in alternate supervised experiences.
  1. The program must include rotations in clinical, community, and foodservice settings.
  2. The clinical rotation must include experiences in settings with high-acuity patients, such as hospitals, long-term care facilities, and outpatient clinics with high acuity to ensure exposure to a wide range of clinical conditions and levels of patient acuity.
  3. The majority of the professional work settings hours spent in the clinical rotation must be completed onsite.

**1.7** A free-standing program:

- a. Must have a program-specific budget to support itself. The budget must document specific line-item revenues and expenses, confirming appropriate allocation and use of financial resources.
- b. That has elected to participate in Title IV student financial aid, and ACEND is identified as the gatekeeper, must document compliance with Title IV responsibilities, including:
  1. Maintain financial documents, including audit and budget processes, confirming appropriate allocation and use of Title IV funds
  2. Have a monitoring process for student loan default rates. If the program's default rate exceeds the federal threshold, the program must provide a default reduction plan, as specified by USDE
  3. Have an appropriate accounting system for management of Title IV financial aid
  4. Inform students of responsibility for timely repayment of Title IV financial aid.

## **Standard 2: Program Mission, Goals, Objectives, and Program Evaluation and Improvement**

**The program must have a clearly formulated and publicly stated mission with supporting goals and objectives by which it intends to prepare students for practice as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. The program must have a program evaluation plan to continuously evaluate the achievement of its mission, goals and objectives use the plan to collect data, improve the program based on findings and update the plan accordingly.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 2.1** A program evaluation plan must be documented, reviewed annually, updated as needed with changes noted, and must include the following components:
- a. The program mission. The program’s mission must be specific to the program, distinguished from other programs in the sponsoring organization and compatible with the mission statement or philosophy of the sponsoring organization
  - b. The program goals. The program must have at least two goals focused on program outcomes for graduates that are consistent with the program’s mission
  - c. The program objectives. The program objectives must measure the full intent of the mission and goals and are used to evaluate the achievement of each program goal
    1. The program must align the following ACEND-required objectives with its program goals and demonstrate that it is operating in the interest of students and the public. The program must set reasonable target measures when the targets are not specified. Required objectives must be evaluated annually using an average of data from the previous three years.
      - a. Program Completion: “At least 80% of students complete program requirements within \_\_\_ (150% of planned program length).”
      - b. Graduate Employment: “At least \_\_\_\_\_ percent of graduate survey respondents who report seeking employment are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.”
      - c. Graduate Performance on Registration Exam:
        1. “At least \_\_\_percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.”
        2. “The program’s one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.”
  - d. Qualitative and/or quantitative data needed to determine whether goals and objectives have been achieved
  - e. Groups from which data will be obtained; internal and external constituents must be represented (such as graduates, administrators, faculty, preceptors, employers, practitioners, nutrition and dietetics education program directors, faculty from other disciplines and advisory committees)
  - f. Evaluation methods that will be used to collect the data
  - g. Individuals responsible for ensuring that data are collected
  - h. Timeline for collecting the necessary data.

- 2.2** The program must evaluate the achievement of its goals and objectives based on its program evaluation plan and provide evidence that:
- a. Program outcomes data are collected according to the program evaluation plan, summarized and analyzed by comparing actual achievements with objectives
  - b. Data analysis is used to evaluate the extent to which goals and objectives are being achieved
  - c. The targets set for ACEND-required objectives are met
  - d. Programmatic planning and outcomes evaluation are integrated with institutional planning and assessment, as appropriate.
- 2.3** Results of the program evaluation process must be used to identify strengths and areas for improvement relative to components of the program (such as policies, procedures, curriculum, teaching methods, faculty, preceptors, resources). Short- and long-term strategies must be developed, and actions must be taken to maintain program strengths and address areas for improvement identified through the evaluation process.
- a. If program objectives are not met, program changes must be identified and actions taken to improve outcomes for unmet objective(s).

## **Standard 3: Curriculum, Learning Activities, and Competency Assessment**

**The competencies must be the basis on which the program curriculum, learning activities, and experiences are built within the context of the mission and goals of the program. Demonstration of competence must be integrated in the coursework and/or supervised practice experiences throughout the program. The program must continuously assess student attainment of required competencies.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

**3.1** The program must have a process for assessment of competencies (Appendix A).

- a. The program must identify the:
  1. Summative assessment for each competency
  2. Methods used, as well as courses and/or supervised practice learning activities in which assessment will occur
  3. Process for monitoring achievement of competencies for each student.
- b. Existing programs must incorporate the competencies and performance indicators into the curriculum on or before August 1, 2028.

**3.2** The Curriculum Map template must be used to document:

- a. Each competency (see Appendix A)
- b. Each performance indicator (see Appendix A)
- c. Course(s) (including supervised practice, if applicable) in which summative assessment of competencies occurs and where performance indicators are covered
- d. How the curriculum:
  1. Is sequentially and logically organized
  2. Progresses from introductory to more advanced learning activities
  3. Builds on previous knowledge, skills, and experience to achieve the expected depth of competence by completion of the program.

**3.3** The program's curriculum must provide learning activities to attain the breadth of the required curriculum competencies needed for entry-level practice as a registered dietitian nutritionist.

- a. Syllabi for courses and rotation descriptions must include the relevant competencies.
- b. Learning activities must prepare students for entry-level professional practice:
  1. Address various conditions, including, but not limited to: cancer, cardiovascular disease, critical illness, disordered eating, endocrine disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, malnutrition, neurological disorders, overweight/obesity, and renal disease
  2. Implement the Nutrition Care Process with various populations with a range of abilities, cultures, and backgrounds across the life cycle, including infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, pregnancy and lactation, and late adulthood
  3. Meet learner needs and competencies. The curriculum must incorporate a variety of educational approaches necessary for the delivery of curriculum content
    - a. If any portion of the program is offered through distance education, the program must ensure regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty.

## **Standard 4: Curriculum Evaluation and Improvement**

**The program must collect and analyze aggregate data on student competency attainment. The results of the evaluation must be used to improve the curriculum to enhance the quality of education provided.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 4.1** Formal curriculum review must routinely occur. The program must collect and analyze aggregate data on how the curriculum prepares students for entry-level professional practice. The results of the aggregate data must be used to evaluate and improve the curriculum to enhance the quality of education provided:
- a. Determine strengths and areas for improvement
  - b. Include input from students and other individuals as appropriate
  - c. Include assessment of comparability of educational experiences and consistency of competency achievement when different courses, delivery methods (such as distance education), or supervised practice sites are used to accomplish the same educational objectives
  - d. Take actions to maintain or improve student learning.

## **Standard 5: Faculty and Preceptors**

**The program must have qualified faculty and preceptors in sufficient numbers to provide the depth and breadth of learning activities required in the curriculum and exposure to the diversity of practice.**

**Program faculty, including the program director, must show evidence of continuing competence appropriate to teaching responsibilities, through professional work experience, graduate education, continuing education, and research or other activities leading to professional growth in the advancement of their profession.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS**

- 5.1** The program must provide evidence that qualified and appropriately credentialed faculty are sufficient to ensure implementation of the program's curriculum and the achievement of program goals and objectives.
- a. The requirements for program faculty (faculty within the academic unit) must include the following:
    - 1. At least one full-time faculty member, in addition to the program director, must hold the RDN credential (not applicable to SPE)
    - 2. Program faculty must meet the sponsoring institution's criteria for appointment and have sufficient education in a field related to the subject in which they teach or must meet the institution's policy for education and/or equivalent experience
    - 3. Program faculty, including the program director, must show evidence of continuing competence and ongoing professional development appropriate to their teaching responsibilities
    - 4. Program faculty must be provided orientation to competency-based education, the program's mission, goals, and objectives, and the ACEND Standards and required competencies
    - 5. Program faculty must be trained in the use of distance education pedagogy and recommended practices
    - 6. The Nutrition Care Process component must be taught by an RDN.
  - b. Formal evaluation of program faculty must routinely occur:
    - 1. The program must have a process for periodic review, including input from students, of the effectiveness of faculty
    - 2. Program faculty must receive feedback and training as needed, based on program evaluation and input from students.
- 5.2** The program must provide evidence that qualified and appropriately credentialed preceptors are sufficient to ensure implementation of the program's curriculum and the achievement of program goals and objectives.
- a. The requirements for program preceptors must include the following:
    - 1. The education and experience needed to provide appropriate guidance for supervised practice experiences. Preceptors must be licensed, as appropriate, to meet state and federal regulations, or credentialed, as needed, in the area in which they are supervising students and must be qualified to serve as educators and professional role models
    - 2. Orientation to competency-based education, the program's mission, goals, and objectives, and the ACEND Standards and required competencies.
  - b. Formal evaluation of program preceptors must routinely occur:

1. The program must have a process for periodic review, including input from students, of the effectiveness of preceptors
2. Program preceptors must receive feedback and training as needed, based on program evaluation and input from students.

## **Standard 6: Supervised Practice Sites**

**The program must have policies and procedures for securing sites to maintain written agreements with institutions, organizations and/or agencies providing supervised practice experiences to meet the competencies. The program must ensure that students have secured geographically accessible rotations for timely completion of the program.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 6.1** Supervised practice site requirements. The program must have written policies and procedures:
- a. For site selection and student placement
  - b. That outline the issuance and maintenance of written affiliation agreements.
    1. Agreements must delineate the rights and responsibilities of both the sponsoring organization and affiliating institutions, organizations and/or agencies.
    2. Agreements must be signed by individuals with appropriate institutionally-assigned authority in advance of placing students.
    3. Issuance of written affiliation agreements must be the responsibility of the program and not the student.
  - c. That define a timeline for the periodic evaluation of the adequacy and appropriateness of supervised practice facilities.
- 6.2** For programs where students identify their own supervised practice sites and/or preceptors, the program must:
- a. Ensure that clinical rotation sites are secured before students begin their supervised practice component
  - b. Have written policies describing the process of securing sites when students are unable to locate a site(s) or preceptor(s) to ensure timely completion of the program.

## **Standard 7: Information to Prospective Students and the Public**

**The program must provide clear, consistent, and accurate information about all program requirements to prospective students and the public at large.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 7.1** Program policies, procedures, practices, and materials related to student recruitment and admission must comply with state and federal laws and regulations. Recruitment and admission practices must be applied fairly and consistently.
- 7.2** All program information for prospective students and the public must be current, accurate, and consistent and provide a reference to where complete program information can be found. Information about the program must be readily available to prospective students and the public via a program website and must include at least the following:
- a. Accreditation status, including the full name, address, phone number, and website of ACEND on the program's website homepage
  - b. Description of the program, including the program's mission, goals, and objectives
  - c. A statement that program outcomes data are available upon request along with program contact information
  - d. Information about the requirements and process to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN), including education, supervised practice, the CDR credentialing exam, state licensure/certification, states for which the program meets state requirements for licensure/certification, and how the program fits into the process
  - e. Estimated cost to students, including:
    1. Estimated total cost of tuition and institution fees (such as lab and technology fees)
    2. Estimated required program-specific costs, including supplies and services (such as program course fees, drug testing, lab coats, and membership fees)
    3. A description of variable costs related to the program (such as books, transportation, housing, and other expenses)
  - f. Availability of financial aid and loan deferments (federal or private), scholarships, stipends, and other monetary support, if applicable
  - g. Application and admission requirements, including information on the Dietetics Application Process and Traffic Rules, and connection to achieve academic competencies
  - h. Academic and program calendar or schedule
  - i. Graduation and program completion requirements, including:
    1. Requirements to earn the verification statement
    2. Maximum time allowed to complete program requirements and/or receive a verification statement
  - j. Guidance about distance education components, such as the expectations for required equipment, competence and skills related to technology, and other requirements, if applicable

- k. If students are required to locate their own supervised practice sites and/or preceptors, requirements for this must be described, including the program's role and responsibility to secure geographically accessible sites for students to ensure timely completion of the program
- l. A statement indicating whether prior learning assessment is available for coursework and/or experiences.

## **Standard 8: Policies and Procedures for Enrolled Students**

**The program must have written policies and procedures that protect the rights of students and are consistent with current institutional practice.**

### **REQUIRED ELEMENTS:**

- 8.1** Programs must have policies and procedures specific to nutrition and dietetics programs or refer to institutional policies. The policies must be provided to students in a single comprehensive document, such as in a program handbook or on a program website. Policies and procedures must include:
- a. Student Support
    - 1. Support for the variety of needs of students
    - 2. Ensure all students are treated with dignity and respect by program faculty and preceptors
    - 3. Access to student support services, such as health services, counseling, tutoring and testing, and financial aid resources
  - b. Student Performance Monitoring
    - 1. The process of assessment, including academic performance, academic integrity, and professionalism
    - 2. Academic performance concerns are addressed in a timely and adequate manner to facilitate students' progression in the program
  - c. Student Remediation and Retention
    - 1. The process for evaluating the need for remedial instruction and other support
    - 2. The procedure for creating an action plan that delineates where program expectations have not been met and the actions needed to satisfy program requirements
  - d. Confidentiality
    - 1. Protection of privacy of student information, including students in distance learning
    - 2. When using distance instruction and/or online testing, strategies used to verify the identity of a student
  - e. Requirements for Program Completion
    - 1. Requirements to earn the verification statement
    - 2. Maximum time allowed to complete program requirements and receive a verification statement must follow the sponsoring academic institution's policy. In the absence of an institutional policy, the maximum time must be no less than three years
  - f. Issuance of Verification Statement
    - 1. Providing verification statements, including timing, delivery method, and number issued, if applicable to all students who complete program requirements
  - g. Supervised Practice
    - 1. Securing geographically accessible sites for students
    - 2. Tracking individual students' supervised practice hours in professional work settings and in alternate practice activities. Hours granted for prior learning, if given, also must be documented.
    - 3. Insurance requirements, including those for professional liability

4. Liability for safety in travel to or from assigned areas
  5. Injury or illness while in a facility for supervised practice
  6. Drug testing and criminal background checks, if required by the supervised practice facilities
  7. Requirement that students doing supervised practice must not be used to replace employees
- h. Complaints
1. The process for filing and handling complaints about the program from students and other individuals that includes recourse to an administrator other than the program director and prevents retaliation
  2. The process for submitting written complaints to ACEND related to program noncompliance with ACEND accreditation standards after all other options with the program and institution have been exhausted
- i. Credit for Prior Education and Experience
1. Evaluating the equivalency of prior learning and experience to the program competencies. Otherwise, the program must indicate that it does not assess prior learning or competence
- j. Disciplinary/termination procedures
- k. Additional Policies
1. Student access to their own student file
  2. Program schedule, vacations, holidays, and leaves of absence
  3. Compensation practices when students are paid compensation as part of the program
  4. Withdrawal and refund of tuition and fees.

## APPENDIX A

### Entry-Level Competencies for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

ACEND’s Entry- Level Competencies and Performance Indicators for the Supervised Practice Experience Program in Nutrition and Dietetics (SPE) are organized hierarchically from broad learning expectations to more specific indicators.

- Level 1: The Units (e.g., Unit 1, Unit 2) are the broad content areas that describe a group of competencies and a focus area
- Level 2: The Competencies (e.g., 1.1, 1.2) follow and describe what learners should achieve within that unit. Competencies identify expected performance (knowledge, skill, and judgment)
- Level 3: The Performance Indicators are the sub-statements (e.g., 1.1.1, 1.1.2) that define each competency or the level of expected performance into specific, measurable skills that demonstrate how the broader outcome is applied in practice

#### Setting where each Competency and its Performance Indicators Are to be Assessed and Addressed

The following table outlines the competencies (indicated by bolded two-digit numbers) to be assessed, along with their corresponding performance indicators (indicated by three-digit numbers) to be addressed. Check marks indicate the specific settings where each competency and performance indicator will be addressed. As a reminder, the competencies are assessed and noted in the Competency Assessment Table.

- **Academic Programs:** The competencies and performance indicators specified for the academic setting must be integrated into a graduate degree program. SPEs may also address the academic C and PIs, if they choose.
- **Supervised Practice:** The expectation is that the competencies and performance indicators designated for supervised practice are addressed in the rotations with real-life practice or through alternative practice opportunities that closely mimic real-world experiences. However, a SPE may encounter constraints that impact the availability of practice environments and resources. Therefore, some supervised practice C and PIs may be assessed/addressed within academic programs.

Unit 1: Community, Public Health, and Population Health	Academic	Supervised Practice
<b>1.1 Apply epidemiological concepts and evidence to evaluate the relationships between diet and disease development (S)</b>	✓	
1.1.1 Evaluate the strength of the association, sources of bias, and confounding factors (S)	✓	
1.1.2 Use nutrition surveillance data to identify patterns of disease to determine population health and nutrition needs (S)	✓	
1.1.3 Examine how nutrition, nutrition education, and nutrition-related diseases are impacted by globalization (S)	✓	
1.1.4 Prioritize and implement health risk reduction strategies and policies (S)	✓	
<b>1.2 Use program planning steps to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate community programs (D)</b>	✓	
1.2.1 Conduct and interpret community and population-based needs assessments to develop a program considering all relevant factors (D)	✓	

1.2.2	Identify resources and partnerships to support the program's sustainability (D)	✓	
1.2.3	Implement a program that considers relevant data and addresses the nutrition needs of the community or population (D)	✓	
1.2.4	Implement marketing strategies to promote nutrition products, programs, or services to target audiences (D)	✓	
1.2.5	Evaluate the program using intervention outcomes (D)	✓	
1.2.6	Communicate evaluation outcomes and make recommendations to promote change and justify the program (D)	✓	
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Develop and provide education based on the learners' determinants of health (D)</b>		✓
1.3.1	Apply education theories, pedagogy, and education principles when developing, modifying, and implementing education (D)		✓
1.3.2	Translate basic to advanced food and nutrition science knowledge into understandable language tailored to the audience (D)		✓
1.3.3	Communicate complex nutrition information to various audiences (D)		✓

<b>Unit 2: Nutrition Care Process and Medical Nutrition Therapy</b>		<b>Academic</b>	<b>Supervised Practice</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Integrate food and nutrition sciences into the nutrition care process (D)</b>	✓	
2.1.1	Use evidence-based information related to molecular science (for example, genes, proteins, metabolites) and microbes to inform nutrition decisions (D)	✓	
2.1.2	Apply knowledge of anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, and food science to make nutrition decisions (D)	✓	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Conduct a nutrition assessment for individuals and groups, including patients/clients with high acuity (D)</b>		✓
2.2.1	Implement nutrition assessment tools based on patient/client factors (D)		✓
2.2.2	Collect and identify relevant and accurate subjective information from multiple sources (D)		✓
2.2.3	Conduct a nutrition-focused physical exam using established guidelines (D)		✓
2.2.4	Collect food and nutrition-related medical history, mental health, physical activity, and relevant determinants of health (D)		✓
2.2.5	Determine macronutrient, micronutrient, and fluid requirements (D)		✓

2.2.6	Conduct and interpret indirect calorimetry measurements (S)		✓
2.2.7	Perform blood pressure testing and conduct waived point-of-care laboratory testing (for example, blood glucose or cholesterol) (D)		✓
2.2.8	Order and interpret biochemical and biospecimen tests to inform nutrition decisions (D)		✓
2.2.9	Identify signs and symptoms of nutrient deficiencies and excesses (D)		✓
2.2.10	Consider barriers that influence nutrition status (D)		✓
2.2.11	Determine the accuracy and reliability of nutrition assessment data (D)		✓
2.2.12	Identify appropriate mathematical formulas and perform calculations to determine nutrition requirements (D)		✓
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Develop a nutrition diagnosis according to Nutrition Care Process terminology (D)</b>		✓
2.3.1	Analyze and synthesize nutrition assessment data to inform nutrition diagnosis(es) (D)		✓
2.3.2	Devise a problem, etiology, sign, and symptom (PES) statement and outline rationale for the diagnosis (D)		✓
2.3.3	Prioritize the nutrition diagnosis(es) (D)		✓
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Develop an individualized plan of care that incorporates medical nutrition therapy in collaboration with the patient/client, including those with high acuity (D)</b>		✓
2.4.1	Develop measurable goals that address nutrition care needs and nutrition diagnosis (D)		✓
2.4.2	Establish the need and evaluate indications for nutrition support and therapeutic diets (D)		✓
2.4.3	Consider relevant factors when recommending the use of oral nutrition supplements (D)		✓
2.4.4	Identify indications and contraindications of complementary and integrative nutrition (D)		✓
2.4.5	Evaluate the availability of services to support access to nutrition care and to meet nutrition goals (D)		✓
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Incorporate genetic data into a personalized nutrition plan (S)</b>	✓	
2.5.1	Examine the influence of genetic variations (for example, SNPs) on nutrient metabolism and diet response (K)	✓	
2.5.2	Analyze and interpret results from genetic and nutrigenetic tests (S)	✓	

2.5.3	Create personalized nutritional interventions for individuals with specific genetic variation (S)	✓	
2.5.4	Evaluate the benefits and limitations of precision nutrition tools (S)	✓	
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Implement and manage medical nutrition therapy interventions (D)</b>		✓
2.6.1	Order medical nutrition therapy to address nutrition goals (D)		✓
2.6.2	Integrate understanding of foundational sciences to manage medical nutrition therapy, diet, and disease (D)		✓
2.6.3	Implement the nutrition intervention and nutrition plan of care with patients/clients and other team members (D)		✓
2.6.4	Document all elements of the nutrition care process following professional standards and organizational policies (D)		✓
2.6.5	Conduct coding and billing procedures to obtain payment for nutrition services under various healthcare payment models (S)		✓
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Monitor and evaluate the impact of nutrition intervention on the nutrition diagnosis (D)</b>		✓
2.7.1	Apply nutrition care outcome indicators to evaluate the impact of the nutrition intervention (D)		✓
2.7.2	Assess adherence to nutrition intervention (D)		✓
2.7.3	Make recommendations to modify the nutrition plan of care or nutrition intervention, considering barriers to meeting the nutrition goals (D)		✓
2.7.4	Summarize the impact of nutrition interventions on patient/client outcomes (D)		✓
2.7.5	Analyze reasons for deviation from expected nutrition outcomes (D)		✓
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Use technology to enhance practice (D)</b>	✓	✓
2.8.1	Operate technology and devices to create, store, and retrieve nutrition information in a secure and ethical manner, ensuring accountability for outcomes (D)	✓	✓
2.8.2	Analyze data generated by technologies and devices to make evidence-based decisions (D)	✓	✓
2.8.3	Assess AI-generated results for accuracy and relevance and use iterative prompt engineering to refine AI outputs (D)	✓	✓

<b>Unit 3: Clinical Skills:</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Supervised Practice</b>
<b>3.1 Prescribe and administer enteral and parenteral nutrition (D)</b>		✓
3.1.1 Apply medical nutrition therapy to order and manage nutrition support (D)		✓
3.1.2 Recommend vascular and enteral access for nutrition support, considering contraindications and maintenance (S)		✓
3.1.3 Place and secure nasogastric or nasoenteric feeding tubes using proper techniques and ensuring patient/client safety (S)		✓
3.1.4 Verify the tube placement before use (S)		✓
3.1.5 Order and manage feeding and infusion schedule, rate, concentration, and composition to ensure adequate intake and patient/client safety (D)		✓
3.1.6 Monitor and manage fluid, electrolyte, macro- and micro-nutrients, acid-base balance, blood glucose, other laboratory values, and tolerance to nutrition support (D)		✓
<b>3.2 Conduct nutrition counseling and therapy to promote optimal health outcomes in individuals and groups (D)</b>		✓
3.2.1 Assess the nutrition needs and appropriateness for the recommended counseling and therapy (D)		✓
3.2.2 Apply counseling principles and evidence-based practice when providing individual or group sessions (D)		✓
3.2.3 Identify the indications, contraindications, benefits, risks, and limitations of counseling and therapy (D)		✓
3.2.4 Evaluate the effectiveness of the counseling and make necessary modifications (D)		✓
3.2.5 Develop counseling goals in collaboration with patients/clients (D)		✓
3.2.6 Assist with resolving barriers to achieve counseling and therapy goals (D)		✓
<b>3.3 Apply knowledge of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics related to nutrition-related pharmacotherapy (S)</b>	✓	
3.3.1 Demonstrate understanding of pharmacokinetics (absorption, clearance, metabolism, latency period, accumulation, half-life) and routes of administration (S)	✓	
3.3.2 Analyze the impact of nutrition status and diet on pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics (S)	✓	

<b>3.4 Prescribe, recommend, and administer nutrition-related pharmacotherapy (D)</b>		✓
3.4.1 Assess patient/client factors to determine indications for nutrition-related pharmacotherapy (D)		✓
3.4.2 Consider patient/client factors, nutrition impact, indications, side effects, contraindications, benefits, risks, alternatives, and foundational sciences when prescribing, recommending, and administering nutrition-related medication therapy (D)		✓
3.4.3 Apply the principles of safe medication administration (S)		✓
3.4.4 Create the nutrition-related pharmacotherapy plan (for example, modifications to bowel regimens, carbohydrate-to-insulin ratio, or B12 or iron supplementation) (D)		✓
3.4.5 Monitor the response and the effects of nutrition-related medications and take action to make modifications or adjustments (S)		✓
<b>3.5 Perform intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intravenous injections for nutrition-related pharmacotherapy (for example, vitamins or insulin) (S)</b>	✓	
3.5.1 Apply knowledge of anatomy to landmark different injection or infusion sites and the rationale and indication for choosing the site (K)	✓	
3.5.2 Discuss with the patient/client the benefits, risks, anticipated outcomes, and alternative approaches before initiating the injection or infusion (K)	✓	
3.5.3 Demonstrate an awareness of safe administration practices, including confirming the correct patient/client, substance, dose, route, time, and awareness of contraindications (S)	✓	
3.5.4 Calculate and regulate flow rates based on patient/client factors and the substance to be infused (S)	✓	
3.5.5 Identify the correct injection site, accurately draw the substance, and administer the injection using the proper technique while adhering to aseptic and infection control practices (K)	✓	
3.5.6 Perform intradermal, intramuscular, and subcutaneous injections, ensuring patient/client safety and proper administration (S)	✓	
3.5.7 Document the administration, including the substance administered, dosage, route, site, and patient/client response (S)	✓	
<b>3.6 Demonstrate knowledge of the indication and risk for conducting swallowing assessments (K)</b>	✓	
3.6.1 Demonstrate understanding of the phases of swallowing and the anatomy and physiology of the swallow (K)	✓	
3.6.2 Identify indications for the swallowing assessment based on patient/client risk factors and swallowing difficulties (K)	✓	
3.6.3 Identify etiological risk categories, including evaluating cranial nerve function and oral motor assessment (K)	✓	

<b>3.7 Perform swallowing assessments to determine a person's ability to consume solids or liquids safely (S)</b>		✓
3.7.1 Assess signs of aspiration and dysphagia, such as cough, changes in voice post swallow, and decrease in arterial blood oxygenation (S)		✓
3.7.2 Perform a water swallowing trial to identify risk for aspiration and dysphagia, complying with the facility's dysphagia risk-management procedures (S)		✓
3.7.3 Contribute as a member of the interdisciplinary team in a diagnostic swallowing study to assess swallowing mechanics (S)		✓
<b>3.8 Order and interpret imaging to identify the etiology of nutrition problems and to inform nutrition decisions (K)</b>	✓	
3.8.1 Understand the indications, limitations, and protocols for various imaging modalities (for example, DEXA, x-ray, CT, MRI) (K)	✓	
3.8.2 Select the imaging modality based on the clinical question and patient/client characteristics (for example, age, medical history, allergies) (K)	✓	
3.8.3 Analyze images (for example, enteral and parenteral placement, vascular access/line placement, contraindications to enteral nutrition, and body composition) to identify relevant findings, differentiate between normal and abnormal findings, and assess image quality (S)	✓	
3.8.4 Analyze imaging findings or written results, considering other clinical data and tests to arrive at a comprehensive nutrition diagnosis (S)	✓	

<b>Unit 4: Foodservice</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Supervised Practice</b>
<b>4.1 Direct the purchasing, production, and distribution of food products to ensure quantity and quality (D)</b>		✓
4.1.1 Oversee the purchasing, receipt, and storage of products used in food production and services (D)		✓
4.1.2 Analyze the workflow design and recommend modifications or approval for implementation (D)		✓
4.1.3 Develop an operational plan that considers budget, inventory control, staffing needs, and daily tasks (D)		✓

<b>Unit 5: Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Supervised Practice</b>
<b>5.1 Apply critical thinking to make ethical and evidence-based decisions (D)</b>	✓	✓
5.1.1 Use critical thinking through a systematic process that evaluates multiple variables and leads to an informed decision (D)	✓	✓
5.1.2 Incorporate the thought process used in critical thinking models and frameworks (for example, decision trees, theories, system analysis, ethical decision-making frameworks) (D)	✓	✓
<b>5.2 Demonstrate ethical and professional behaviors in accordance with the professional Code of Ethics (D)</b>		✓
5.2.1 Engage in self-reflective practice activities to develop and maintain ongoing competence and professional behaviors (D)		✓
5.2.2 Consult and refer to other health professionals when situations or patient/client needs are beyond personal competence (D)		✓
5.2.3 Adhere to nutrition-related legislation, regulations, and standards of practice (D)		✓
5.2.4 Apply patient/client-centered principles to all activities and services (D)		✓
5.2.5 Identify and take steps to manage unethical, incompetent, or unsafe behavior (D)		✓
5.2.6 Practice in a manner that respects others (D)		✓
5.2.7 Maintain confidentiality and security when sharing, transmitting, storing, and managing protected health information (D)		✓
<b>5.3 Demonstrate leadership skills to guide practice (D)</b>		✓
5.3.1 Apply leadership and management theories and frameworks to inform decisions and behaviors (D)		✓
5.3.2 Respond to social cues and group dynamics to facilitate desired outcomes (D)		✓
5.3.3 Apply principles of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (D)		✓
5.3.4 Reflect on situations and critically evaluate outcomes and possible alternate courses of action (D)		✓
5.3.5 Provide and receive constructive feedback to support professional development and seek feedback for personal growth (D)		✓
5.3.6 Model behaviors that maximize group participation by consulting, listening, and communicating clearly (D)		✓

<b>5.4 Use effective communication, collaboration, and advocacy skills (D)</b>		✓
5.4.1 Use effective and ethical communication skills and techniques to achieve desired goals and outcomes (D)		✓
5.4.2 Facilitate intraprofessional and interprofessional collaboration (D)		✓
5.4.3 Participate in advocacy activities to change or promote new legislation and regulations (D)		✓
5.4.4 Use communication skills to influence or produce a desired outcome during negotiations or conflict resolution (D)		✓
5.4.5 Communicate in a responsive, responsible, respectful, and compassionate manner (D)		✓
<b>5.5 Develop and implement continuous quality management or improvement plans (D)</b>		✓
5.5.1 Align quality management activities with the organizational strategic plan, goals, mission, and vision (D)		✓
5.5.2 Assign responsibilities to various team members according to role and competence (D)		✓
5.5.3 Set and monitor clear targets for team members, departments, and the organization aligned with common goals and objectives (D)		✓
5.5.4 Demonstrate an understanding of how individuals and groups interact within the organization (D)		✓
5.5.5 Evaluate the plan to make modifications to ensure positive outcomes and to meet goals and objectives (D)		✓
5.5.6 Collect and analyze outcome data to determine if established goals and objectives are met (D)		✓
<b>5.6 Apply principles of financial management and productivity (D)</b>		✓
5.6.1 Prioritize activities to manage time and workload effectively (D)		✓
5.6.2 Collect, understand, and analyze financial data to support fiscally responsible decision-making (D)		✓
5.6.3 Analyze components of productivity systems, including units of service and work hours, and make recommendations (D)		✓
5.6.4 Analyze the effectiveness of the budget (D)		✓
5.6.5 Engage in, manage, or lead human resource activities, adhering to applicable laws and regulations (D)		✓

Unit 6: Research	Academic	Supervised Practice
<b>6.1 Conduct research using appropriate scientific design and methods (D)</b>	✓	
6.1.1 Articulate a clear research question or problem and formulate a hypothesis (D)	✓	
6.1.2 Identify and demonstrate appropriate research methods (D)	✓	
6.1.3 Interpret and apply research ethics and responsible conduct in research (D)	✓	
6.1.4 Collect and retrieve data using a variety of methods and technologies (D)	✓	
6.1.5 Analyze research data using appropriate data analysis techniques (D)	✓	
6.1.6 Determine if data support hypothesis(es) and translate research findings into practice implications (D)	✓	
6.1.7 Translate and communicate research findings through a variety of media (D)	✓	
<b>6.2 Apply current research and evidence-based practice to services (D)</b>		✓
6.2.1 Use research terminology when communicating with other professionals (D)		✓
6.2.2 Analyze and formulate a professional opinion based on current research, evidence-based findings, and experiential learning (D)		✓
6.2.3 Critically examine and interpret research and evidence-based information to determine the validity, reliability, and credibility of information (D)		✓

## APPENDIX B

### Accreditation Supplement for International Programs

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) is engaged globally and is committed to ensuring quality education to foster a strong nutrition and dietetics profession worldwide.

**Nutrition and dietetics programs accredited by ACEND and located outside the U.S. and its territories must meet all the ACEND Standards and Required Elements established for U.S.-based programs, except where otherwise specified within this Appendix.**

#### Standard 1: Program Characteristics and Resources

##### Required Element 1.1

The program must be housed in a college or university or offered in a consortium with a college or university. Note, only programs located in colleges and universities can apply for ACEND accreditation as a Supervised Practice Experience (SPE) program.

- If accreditation or a quality assurance process has been established by the country's professional association or regulatory board for nutrition or dietetics, the program must be recognized by this process before applying to ACEND for candidacy for accreditation, and it must be housed in a college or university.
- International programs must be in operation and have enrolled students to apply for eligibility.
- If the native language of the sponsoring institution is not English, the institution must provide all program documents (application materials, published materials, course outlines, handbooks, etc.) to ACEND and its reviewers in English.

##### Required Element 1.5c1

The program director must have earned a degree equivalent to a master's degree conferred by a U.S.-accredited college or university.

##### Required Element 1.5c2

The program director must be credentialed by the country's professional association or regulatory board for nutrition or dietetics, if such an association or board exists. A credential as a registered dietitian nutritionist by the Commission on Dietetic Registration is not required.

##### Required Element 1.6a

Supervised practice hours must be conducted in a work setting in the country where the program is located or in the United States or its territories, possessions (including the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands), or military bases.

## **Standard 1: Program Characteristics and Resources (Continued)**

### **Additional Requirement Under Standard 1**

The program must submit a formal request to the ACEND board of directors if it believes that it cannot meet any required element within the standards or any competency or performance indicators for reasons related to the country's education system, health-care system, or cultural practices. For each required element, competency, or performance indicator that cannot be met, the request must include:

1. The required element, competency, or performance indicator number and its description
2. A detailed explanation of why the required element, competency, or performance indicator cannot be met
3. A detailed recommendation for an equivalent required element, competency, or performance indicator to replace it, if applicable

## **Standard 2: Program Mission, Goals, Objectives and Program Evaluation and Improvement**

### **Required Elements 2.1c1 & c2**

Graduate Performance on Registration Exam objectives: If available, the country's exam is acceptable.

## **Standard 5: Faculty and Preceptors**

### **Required Element 5.1a**

A credential as a registered dietitian nutritionist by the Commission on Dietetic Registration is not required. The faculty member must be credentialed by the country's professional association or regulatory board for nutrition or dietetics, if such an association or board exists.

## **Standard 7: Information to Prospective Students and the Public**

### **Required Element 7.2d**

In addition to the information about the requirements and process to become a U.S. registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN), the program must also provide information about any requirements and process for credentialing/licensure/certification within the country, if applicable.

### **Required Element 7.2g**

The program is not required to provide information on the Dietetics Application Process and Traffic Rules.

## **Standard 8: Policies and Procedures for Enrolled Students**

### **Required Element 8.1b**

The program is not required to provide information on the Dietetics Application Process and Traffic Rules for Applicants.