

# Rationale for Future Education Preparation of Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners

February, 2015  
Updated: July, 2015  
Updated: August, 2015  
Updated: January, 2017

Updated: March, 2017  
Updated: November, 2017  
Updated: August, 2018

## Focus: Positions for Graduates of FEM Programs

- [Associate Degree, Nutrition Health Associate](#)
- [Bachelor's Degree, Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered](#)
- [Graduate Degree, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist](#)
- [Summary of Skill Sets](#)
- [Skills for Future Nutrition and Dietetics Practice Illustration](#)

# **POSITIONS FOR GRADUATES OF FUTURE EDUCATION MODEL ASSOCIATE, BACHELOR'S AND GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS IN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this project was to identify potential positions for graduates of future education model programs and display this information both in text and graphic format.

## **METHOD**

ACEND® worked with consultant, Leanne Worsfold, to review the environmental scan, data collected through stakeholder interviews, focus groups and surveys and competencies developed for each degree level (all reported in previous sections of this *Rationale Document*) to describe future positions in nutrition and dietetics. Based on the written descriptions developed, a graphic designer assisted ACEND in developing an infographic to convey skills of future nutrition and dietetics practitioners based on degree level.

## **RESULTS**

A review of the environmental scan, results of stakeholder interviews, focus groups and surveys and competencies developed for each degree level provided data to develop descriptions of future positions in nutrition and dietetics for practitioners prepared at the associate, bachelor's and graduate degree levels. Table 1 provides a summary of skill sets identified for graduates of each degree level. Figure 1 is the infographic developed to convey skills of future education model program graduates.

### **Associate Degree, Nutrition Health Associate, Potential Settings for Practice and Expected Responsibilities**

**Community Agencies.** Provides support and education in nutrition, food preparation, medication adherence, physical activity, health care system navigation, community assistance programs, substance use and other health topics. Participates in the development of care plans with the individual and their health care team and supports the individual to reduce barriers and achieve goals. Provides support and notifies health care team and program manager regarding changes in: behaviors, nutrition, physical activity, substance use, medication adherence, and other issues as related to the established care plans. Participates as a member of the health care team, providing input and creative strategies to address health issues and promote wellness. Helps coordinate individual's transportation and accompaniment as needed to scheduled appointments. Helps advocate for individual and community needs. Bridges community, cultural, linguistic, educational and other barriers to encourage self-care. Assists with and helps organize food pantries and community events such as health fairs and farmer's markets.

**Social Service Agencies.** Coordinates care to help bridge the gaps and eliminate barriers to health care and social services of identified at-risk individuals. Conducts home and site visits to assess risk. Assists in linking individuals of all ages to identified/needed services. Helps empower individuals to access community resources through referrals, education and outreach. Collects specific nutrition, health, behavioral and social information and reports to health care team. Helps recognize serious potential problems, thus reducing health risks and preventing poor outcomes for individuals and communities.

**Healthcare Organizations.** Helps individuals and families access resources, including health insurance, food, housing, quality care and nutrition and health information. Facilitates communication and individual empowerment in interactions with health care/social service systems. Helps individuals understand their health condition(s) and develop strategies to improve their health and wellbeing. Delivers health information using culturally appropriate terms and concepts. Provides informal counseling, support and follow-up. Makes home visits to chronically ill individuals, pregnant women and nursing mothers, individuals at high risk of health problems and the elderly. Translates and interprets pertinent information for individuals and health care/social service providers.

**Grant Funded Projects.** Conducts outreach to identify individuals who are in need of health care and social services. Assists individuals to obtain access to health care and supportive services. Supports individual's adherence to collaboratively identified health goals through peer support and frequent communication/follow-up. Performs grant intake interviews. Completes required reports such as daily encounter logs, monthly data submissions and summaries of case management notes for medical record documentation. Provides basic advocacy, assessment, planning and casework services. Assists staff in collaborating with community health and social service providers and partner agencies to identify barriers and service gaps.

**Home Health Agencies.** Conducts outreach to individuals living in their homes who are challenged by medical, age, or mobility-related conditions. Advocates for individuals in need of higher level of care so that they are connected to the care and services they need. Facilitates communication between individuals and their health care service providers to address gaps in health treatment. Helps individuals understand and use community services, assisting in scheduling appointments, building a support system, and reinforcing use of self-management and organizational tools. Supports individual well-being by using strong observation and communication skills to identify barriers to accessing care and supporting the care plan. Conducts home visits to gather assessment information. Identifies pertinent information to communicate to the health care team.

### **Bachelor's Degree, Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered Potential Settings for Practice and Expected Responsibilities**

**Foodservice Management in Hospitals, Long-Term Care Facilities, Schools, Colleges and Universities.** Conducts human resources activities such as hiring, training, and performance evaluation. Ensures compliance with regulations, policies and procedures. Prepares and manages budgets. Plans menus, develops and modifies recipes and conducts nutrient analyses of menus to meet required nutrition standards and customer acceptance. Institutes sustainability practices. Purchases food and supplies. Manages preparation and service of meals. Plans, implements and evaluates marketing plans for new products, programs and services. Provides nutrition education for staff, students, and customers.

**Patient/Resident Care in Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities.** Under the supervision of an RDN: Conducts patient/resident nutrition screening and routine assessments, which include vital signs, anthropometric measurements and dietary interviews to identify food preferences, food and nutrient intake and factors relative to food intake and eating behavior. Designs meal plans and provides individual and group nutrition education. Coordinates menu selections with diet orders and monitors

quality and accuracy of food served to patients/residents. Collects, maintains, and communicates data relative to patients'/residents' dietary requirements and monitors satisfaction and tolerance of meals. Functions as part of interprofessional teams. Educates patients/residents in health maintenance and disease prevention.

**Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).** Certifies eligibility of clients for programs and services. Assesses current dietary intake of clients and determines adequacy based on national nutrition guidelines. Obtains, plots and assesses anthropometric data. Provides general, normal nutrition and lactation education. Educates clients in health maintenance and disease prevention under the supervision of the RDN. Consults with and refers to RDN and/or other health professionals as needed for therapeutic nutrition needs of clients. Refers clients to appropriate resources. Conducts nutrition education for groups based on normal nutrition principles and dietary guidelines. Monitors and documents client progress.

**Food Bank/Food Pantries.** Conducts nutrition education for clients, staff, and community groups based on normal nutrition principles, dietary guidelines and food resource management for populations with less complex, less acute nutritional health care needs. Develops recipes and menu plans using food commodities with consideration for those with limited financial and other resources. Conducts food preparation and culinary demonstrations. Monitors and evaluates nutritional content, food safety, and quality assurance of food products. Advocates for clients and refers to other service providers, as needed.

**School Nutrition Programs, Child Care Centers, Head Start Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Programs, and Congregate/Home-delivered Feeding Programs for the Older Adult.** Plans, develops and implements nutrition programs and resources based on needs of the target group. Plans menus to meet required nutrition standards and customer acceptance and develops, modifies and conducts nutrient analyses of recipes and menus, as appropriate. Monitors and evaluates menus and foodservice programs to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and standards. Conducts nutrition education for groups based on normal nutrition principles and dietary principles for clients/patients with less complex, less acute nutritional health care needs. Consults with RDN on nutritional needs of clients with complex and acute nutritional health care needs.

**Health Clubs, Fitness Centers, Youth Centers, and Corporate Wellness Programs.** Conducts nutrition screening, which includes anthropometric measurements and dietary interviews to identify food and nutrient intake and other factors which influence food intake and eating behavior. Works with clients to identify health-related goals and design a health program that addresses all aspects of lifestyle and wellness, including healthy eating and physical activity. Conducts food preparation and culinary demonstrations. Provides individual and group nutrition education and designs menus, both of which focus on general health, normal nutrition principles and dietary guidelines to help clients/patients achieve their health-related goals. Refers clients with complex and acute nutritional health care needs to the RDN.

**Grocery Stores, Restaurants, Retail Foodservice Operations.** Provides food and nutrition information to customers. Conducts grocery store tours to teach customers how to read and interpret food labels and select healthier food products to meet their dietary needs. Provides nutrition education and culinary classes which focus on basic nutrition principles, dietary guidelines and culinary techniques to help customers choose and prepare healthier foods to achieve their health-related goals. Works in

collaboration with purchasing departments and food distributors to procure more healthful/nutrient dense food offerings. Develops, analyzes and modifies menu items, recipes, and prepared foods and designs related marketing materials. Modifies recipes taking into consideration how nutrition and ingredient modifications, culinary aspects, and cost and time factors impact quality and other characteristics of the final product. Conducts nutrient analysis of menus, recipes and products and provides advice on nutrition content and health claims on product labels. Collaborates with chef to provide food preparation and culinary demonstrations. Develops displays, brochures, recipes, websites, marketing and promotional messages and other nutrition education materials. Utilizes social media for education and marketing purposes.

### **Graduate Degree, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Potential Settings for Practice and Expected Responsibilities**

**Patient/Client/Resident Care in Hospitals, Ambulatory Care/Outpatient Clinics, Long-Term Care Facilities, Home Health Care, and Hospice Programs.** Provides personalized nutrition care by conducting nutrition focused physical examinations and applying the nutrition care process (NCP). Prescribes diets and nutrition-related pharmacotherapy. Creates, implements and utilizes evidence-informed practice guidelines and translates research into practice. Demonstrates cultural competency. Provides psychological counseling and therapies. Provides nutrition education and counseling to effect behavior change in patients/clients/residents and families through in person and tele-health technology. Provides in-service education, programs and case consultation to physicians and other health care professionals and staff. Demonstrates competence in technology and nutrition specific informatics. Works collaboratively with interprofessional teams for care coordination, case management and the creation of clinical pathways across the continuum of care. Designs continuous quality improvement criteria/projects, and research studies, including outcomes research; develops protocols and collects, analyzes, interprets and summarizes the data. Participates in grant and protocol writing and design. Makes referrals to other health care professionals and community resources as appropriate. Supervises Nutrition and Dietetics Technicians, Registered, Nutrition Health Associates and other support personnel.

**Research Centers.** Selects, reviews, analyzes and synthesizes current scientific findings for their nutrition and public health implications and applications. Prepares and submits grant proposals independently or in collaboration with other organization staff. Designs and implements research projects appropriate for the organization. Reports research results at professional conferences and writes for professional publications.

**Public/Population Health and Community Nutrition in Government Agencies, Non-Profit Organizations and Non-Government Organizations.** Monitors health and nutrition status to identify population and community health and nutrition problems through the development and utilization of nutrition and health surveillance systems. Diagnoses and investigates health and nutrition problems in the community and communicates results to local, state and national health authorities and policy makers. Plans, implements and evaluates population-based nutrition programs and services that support individual and community health efforts, focusing on primary prevention strategies. Develops, evaluates and enforces local, state and federal health and nutrition policies that address and protect

health and nutrition for individuals and populations. Plans, implements and evaluates programs and services to improve access to and availability of health promoting food, nutrition and physical activity environments at the local, county, state, national and international levels. Informs, educates, and empowers the public about health and nutrition issues through social marketing, social media and other population-level strategies. Convenes and mobilizes nation-wide, state-wide and/or community partnerships to identify and solve health and nutrition problems, focusing on policy, systems and environmental change strategies. Conducts research for new insights and innovative solutions to health and nutrition problems. Ensures population-wide access to health and nutrition programs and services and evaluates their accessibility, effectiveness and quality. Develops, implements and utilizes nutrition surveillance systems. Assures a competent nutrition workforce. Supervises other nutrition professionals and/or paraprofessionals and clerical staff and provides technical assistance in a specific focus area of practice, such as communications/mass media, data management and nutrition surveillance, and environmental health and food safety; or, works with a specific population group, such as maternal and child health, children and youth with special health care needs and adult health promotion/chronic disease prevention and control.

**School Wellness.** Coordinates development, implementation and monitoring of school wellness policies with school nurse, principal and local board of education. Develops menus, recipes and feeding protocol for special needs students. Conducts nutrient analysis of menus. Communicates nutritional content of meals to the school community. Works with school nurse to provide nutrition education to the school community. Develops, coordinates with teachers and conducts nutrition education for students. Monitors federal, state and local regulations for meeting nutritional requirements of meals. Writes grants to support nutrition education programs in schools; coordinates implementation, and monitors success.

**Foodservice Management in Group Care Facilities (Child and Adult Care Food Programs, Congregate Feeding Programs for the Older Adult, Food Banks/Food Pantries, Rehabilitation Centers and Correctional Facilities).** Consults with other members of the health organization team that licenses, certifies, and monitors the safety and quality of care in residential and non-residential group facilities serving meals to children or adults. Provides consultation on menu planning, food purchasing, food preparation and feeding to meet normal and therapeutic nutritional needs of the specific clients/patients served. Provides input and guidance related to nutritional assessment and care of clients/patients, foodservice-related laws and regulations, and kitchen and dining area layout and design. Provides input on financial and human resources necessary for the management of the foodservice operation. Promotes education and consultation for foodservice personnel.

**Academic Institutions.** Prepares materials for and teaches courses. Assesses student learning. Provides career guidance to students. Precepts and mentors students in supervised learning experiences. Participates in and contributes to curriculum development by planning, developing, and evaluating new and existing courses and curriculum. Leads accredited academic programs. Serves on committees, co-curricular activities and institution events.

**Foodservice Management in Hospitals, Long-Term Care Facilities, Schools, Colleges, Universities, Restaurants and Cafeterias.** Directs and controls menu management for regular and/or therapeutic diets. Evaluates purchasing needs for food, supplies and equipment, develops specifications, negotiates contracts and purchases with vendors. Develops and supervises systems for food receiving, storage, preparation and service. Develops and monitors the budget and manages financial resources within the

budget. Manages human resources. Identifies food system critical control points and develops protocols for safe food handling, monitoring and evaluation of food hazards. Develops and implements policies, systems and environments that advance healthy, sustainable food, energy, waste and water management systems. Incorporates electronic information management tools into operations and services. Prepares and implements emergency preparedness plans for foodservice facilities and patients/clients/residents/customers. Plans, implements, and evaluates marketing plans for new products, programs and services. Evaluates and makes recommendations in kitchen and dining room layout and design and/or redesign. Develops policies and procedures and monitors adherence to federal, state and local regulations. Prepares training materials and conducts training and nutrition education programs based on cultural considerations and needs of the target group. Trains the chef and culinary staff on proper recipe protocol and cooking techniques to assure accuracy in ingredients and portions represented in analyzed recipes (if nutrition information is provided to customers). Designs, conducts, applies and disseminates research. Develops, implements, monitors and evaluates local wellness policies and addresses food allergies and therapeutic diet management. Supervises foodservice operations and catering for special events.

**Food Companies, Foodservice Equipment and Supply Companies and Pharmaceutical Companies.**

Directs the sales of food, equipment, supplies or pharmaceuticals conducted by other employees. Supervises and trains the sales force, monitors sales, reviews current trends on food, equipment, supplies or pharmaceuticals and designs, implements and monitors customer service and satisfaction programs. Develops and tests food products and recipes to be utilized by consumers and organizations in the provision of meals and foods for others. Develops menus for individuals and families for use in selecting healthy and modified diets and/or provides consultative services to institutions to which the company provides food, supplies or services. Identifies potential food ingredients for allergies and intolerances. Provides guidance on interpreting labels and ingredient and health claims on food packages. Works to influence policy for science-based food labeling claims. Monitors and utilizes protocols to ensure regulation compliance.

**Grocery Stores/Restaurants/ Retail /Food Companies/Commodity Groups/Marketing and Public Relations.** Integrates food and nutrition science with food intake recommendations and public health issues and translates them into guidance for marketing, product development and sales. Uses knowledge of labeling and regulatory compliance to influence the development, package design, labeling and advertisement of food products and menu items. Develops and reviews regulated label information and provides guidance on nutrition criteria for product and menu development. Assists with development of criteria for food rating systems and shelf edge communications programs, helps assign them to food and menu items, and conducts consumer education campaigns and evaluates the results. Conducts store tours and provides nutrition guidance and personalized food and menu recommendations to customers on special diets and those with specific food, nutrition and health concerns. Creates nutrition science and sales communication materials in partnership with the communications team. Trains the sales team on nutrition-related topics. Serves as a spokesperson for the company and manages traditional, social and digital media, public relations and influencer outreach. Builds relationships and partnerships in the community to create a broad approach to health and wellness, to attract and increase customer loyalty, and to improve the financial metrics of the company.

**Food Companies and Food Commodity Groups.** Develops food and nutrition-related oral and written communications for lay audiences based on general nutrition principles, dietary guidelines and research. Conducts literature reviews, develops nutrition education tools and materials for clients/patients with less complex, less acute nutritional health care needs, makes presentations to lay audiences, writes nutrition content for websites, and utilizes social media for education and marketing purposes. Tests, develops, modifies and conducts nutrient analysis of menus, recipes and products and provides advice on nutrition content and health claims on product labels.

**Sustainable Food Systems, Food Cooperatives.** Participates in coalition building, strategic planning, policy development, food assessment and food security initiatives to build food systems that enhance human health, promote environmental renewal and foster local economies. Assists in the creation of food systems that increase knowledge of and access to safe, healthy, affordable, local and sustainably produced foods. Conducts educational programs and develops other resources that focus on eating locally, understanding food labels, nutritional content of sustainable foods, culinary techniques and other related issues. Utilizes social media for educational and marketing purposes. Educates stakeholders on the relationship between sourcing local foods and local economic growth. Facilitates the aggregation, marketing, and/or distribution of products from local farmers and ranchers to consumers.

Table 1: Summary of skill set for practitioners graduating from future education model degree programs

<b>Associate Degree Nutrition Health Associate</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (NDTR)</b>	<b>Graduate Degree Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works under the supervision of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) or other health practitioners</li> <li>• Skill set includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communication, interpersonal and collaboration skills needed to work with culturally diverse individuals and health team members</li> <li>○ Basic food and nutrition knowledge needed to assist individuals in their daily food selection and preparation</li> <li>○ Ability to integrate knowledge of determinants of health into nutrition care and services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works under the RDN providing nutrition care; works independently managing foodservice operations</li> <li>• Skill set includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communication, interpersonal and collaboration skills needed to manage employees and work with clients/patients and health team members</li> <li>○ Quantity food purchasing, preparation and service knowledge and skills needed to manage foodservice operations</li> <li>○ Food and nutrition knowledge and skills to provide nutrition education for clients/patients</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works autonomously providing medical nutrition therapy and client/patient counseling, conducting food and nutrition research, and directing community and global health programs and foodservice operations</li> <li>• Skill set includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nutrition knowledge and evidence-informed practice and critical thinking and analysis skills needed to manage and prescribe nutrition care and nutrition-related pharmacotherapy</li> <li>○ Counseling skills needed to affect behavior change</li> <li>○ Management, interpersonal communication and leaderships skills needed to lead interprofessional teams, guide implementation of community and global health programs and direct foodservice operations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Skills for Future Nutrition and Dietetics Practice

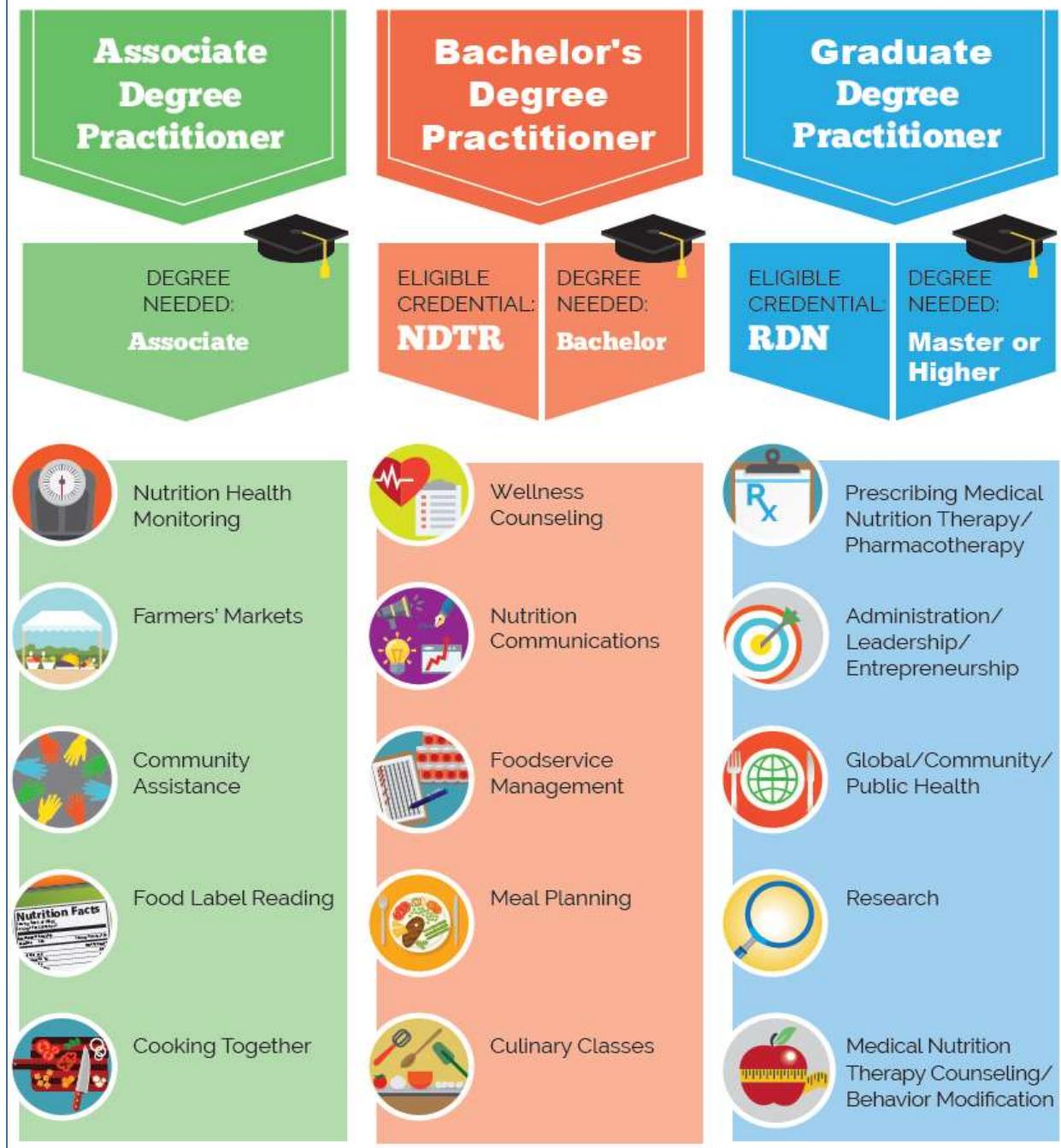


Figure 1: Infographic of skills of graduates of future education model programs