

Academic Competencies for Degree-Granting Bridge

The ACEND academic competencies are 11 competencies and performance indicators that ACEND's Degree-Granting Bridges must integrate into the degree program. Refer to the 2027 Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Coordinated Program (CP) or Supervised Practice Experience (SPE) Program, Appendix A, for a complete list of the Entry-Level Competencies for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.

Competencies 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

Unit 1: Community, Public Health, and Population Health

1.1 Apply epidemiological concepts and evidence to evaluate the relationships between diet and disease development (S)

- 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)

1.2 Use program planning steps to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate community programs (D)

- 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)

Unit 2: Nutrition Care Process and Medical Nutrition Therapy

2.1 Integrate food and nutrition sciences into the nutrition care process (D)

- 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)

2.5 Incorporate genetic data into a personalized nutrition plan (S)

- 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)

2.8 Use technology to enhance practice (D)

- 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)

Unit 3: Clinical Skills

3.3 Apply knowledge of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics related to nutrition-related pharmacotherapy (S)

- 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)

3.5 Perform intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intravenous injections for nutrition-related pharmacotherapy (for example, vitamins or insulin) (S)

- 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)

3.6 Demonstrate knowledge of the indication and risk for conducting swallowing assessments (K)

- 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)

3.8 Order and interpret imaging to identify the etiology of nutrition problems and to inform nutrition decisions (K)

- 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)

Unit 5: Leadership and Management

5.1 Apply critical thinking to make ethical and evidence-based decisions (D)

- 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)

Unit 6: Research

6.1 Conduct research using appropriate scientific design and methods (D)

- 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)

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