

Associate Level Competencies for Nutrition and Dietetics

ACEND's Associate Level Competencies and Performance Indicators are organized hierarchically from broad learning expectations to more specific indicators. The Entry-level Competencies for the Nutrition and Dietetics Technician (DT) follow under Units 4 and 5.

- 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: Foundational Knowledge

1.1 Apply foundational sciences and knowledge in food and nutrition (K)

- 1.1.1 Perform food and nutrition calculations using math skills (S)
- 1.1.2 Apply knowledge of microbiology to food safety principles (K)
- 1.1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of chemistry to the fundamentals of nutrition (K)
- 1.1.4 Apply knowledge of basic food science to food preparation techniques and culinary nutrition (S)
- 1.1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of anatomy and physiology related to disease, wellness, and nutrition (K)
- 1.1.6 Demonstrate knowledge of psychology, sociology, or anthropology of human behavior (K)
- 1.1.7 Integrate principles of nutrition across the lifespan (K)
- 1.1.8 Demonstrate appropriate use of medical terminology and abbreviations (K)
- 1.1.9 Recognize the components of the Nutrition Care Process (K)
- 1.1.10 Compare health care delivery systems that impact nutrition and dietetics (K)

Unit 2: Community Services

2.1 Promote health and wellness for individuals and groups (D)

- 2.1.1 Plan meals that promote health for individuals and target groups (D)

- 2.1.2 Apply nutrition and health coaching strategies to meet the goals of individuals (S)
- 2.1.3 Direct patients/clients to resources and services, including RDN, based on identified needs and access (S)
- 2.1.4 Perform waived point-of-care tests, anthropometric and body composition measurements (D)
- 2.1.5 Discuss the influence of the determinants of health on nutrition and the well-being of individuals and communities (D)
- 2.1.6 Demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences that impact food and nutrition (D)

2.2 Provide education to individuals and groups based on the learners' determinants of health (S)

- 2.2.1 Select current evidence-based educational materials based on audience needs (D)
- 2.2.2 Apply learning principles to modify and deliver education based on the learners' determinants of health (S)
- 2.2.3 Provide education using various delivery methods to promote health and wellness (S)
- 2.2.4 Evaluate the effectiveness of education and make modifications as required (S)

Unit 3: Leadership

3.1 Apply critical thinking to make ethical and evidence-based decisions (S)

- 3.1.1 Determine the credibility of information and sources (S)
- 3.1.2 Identify nutrition resources and apply evidence-based guidelines to inform decisions (S)

3.2 Demonstrate ethical and professional behaviors (S)

- 3.2.1 Demonstrate ethical behaviors in accordance with the professional Code of Ethics (S)
- 3.2.2 Maintain confidentiality and security when sharing, transmitting, storing, and managing protected health information (K)
- 3.2.3 Perform self-reflection to identify skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences, and develop goals for self-improvement (D)
- 3.2.4 Prioritize activities to manage time and workload (S)

3.3 Advocate for opportunities in the nutrition and dietetic profession (S)

- 3.3.1 Identify community and organizational support services and resources (K)
- 3.3.2 Engage in advocacy efforts that impact nutrition and dietetics at the local, state, or national level (S)
- 3.3.3 Demonstrate self-advocacy for financial and professional opportunities and advancement (S)

3.4 Work collaboratively with teams to achieve desired outcomes (S)

- 3.4.1 Identify the roles and responsibilities of interprofessional team members (K)

3.4.2 Demonstrate active participation and promote teamwork, respecting opinions and experiences (S)

3.4.3 Recognize differences and manage conflict (S)

3.5 Demonstrate effective professional communication skills (D)

3.5.1 Communicate in a clear, effective, and respectful manner (D)

3.5.2 Identify and address barriers to communication (S)

3.5.3 Adapt communications for a target audience (D)

3.5.4 Ensure timely, clear, accurate, and valid documentation using correct spelling and grammar (D)

3.5.5 Use communication skills to influence or produce a desired outcome during negotiations or conflict resolution discussions (D)

3.6 Engage in management and continuous quality activities (S)

3.6.1 Understand budgeting principles to achieve financial targets (K)

3.6.2 Incorporate marketing principles in the promotion of services and products (S)

3.6.3 Recognize principles of sustainability to minimize waste and protect the environment (K)

3.6.4 Collect data to inform program planning, evaluation, and quality improvement (S)

Entry-Level Competencies for the Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (Units 4 & 5)

DT Unit 4: Nutrition Care for Individuals

4.1 Conduct nutrition screening to identify health and nutrition-related problems (D)

4.1.1 Interview clients/patients and gather information from other sources to identify a nutrition-related problem following established tools and guidelines (D)

4.1.2 Identify priority needs based on screening results (D)

4.2 Participate in the nutrition assessment to inform the nutrition priority goals (D)

4.2.1 Obtain diet history and the level of physical activity (D)

4.2.2 Collect, assess, and interpret anthropometric measures and body composition (D)

4.2.3 Recognize pertinent laboratory values and their impact on health and nutrition (D)

4.2.4 Identify medication classifications, categories, and indicators for commonly used prescription and over-the-counter medications and dietary supplements (for example, weight loss, hypertension, diuretics, diabetes) (K)

4.2.5 Develop nutrition-related priorities, goals, and objectives to effect change and enhance wellness in stable health conditions and predictable nutritional needs (S)

4.3 Participate in nutrition interventions and monitoring of nutrition care (D)

- 4.3.1 Perform nutrition and wellness interventions for patients/clients with stable health conditions and predictable nutrition needs (D)
- 4.3.2 Address food-medication interactions and food allergies to ensure client/patient safety (S)
- 4.3.3 Assist the RDN in implementing and monitoring nutrition interventions (S)
- 4.3.4 Refer situations outside of personal competence to RDNs or other professionals (S)
- 4.3.5 Document data collection, interventions, monitoring, education provided, and interactions with clients/patients or other professionals (S)

DT Unit 5: Foodservice

5.1 Apply sanitation and food safety principles in compliance with state and federal regulations (D)

- 5.1.1 Apply sanitation principles related to food safety, personnel, and consumers (D)
- 5.1.2 Demonstrate awareness of food regulations specific to the practice settings (K)
- 5.1.3 Adhere to policies and procedures to optimize food and water safety in compliance with state and federal regulations (D)

5.2 Design meals that promote health and disease management for various individuals and groups across the lifespan (D)

- 5.2.1 Develop and modify menus and meal plans to ensure acceptability and affordability for accommodating age, dietary patterns, preferences, and health status (D)
- 5.2.2 Evaluate recipe acceptability using sensory evaluation methods (D)
- 5.2.3 Modify recipes and ingredients based on preferences, dietary needs, trends, seasonality, and product availability (D)
- 5.2.4 Design therapeutic diets applying food science principles (D)
- 5.2.5 Adjust recipes to scale for the desired quantity (D)
- 5.2.6 Prepare infant formula and human milk safely and accurately to meet patient/client needs (S)

5.3 Manage the production, distribution, and service of quantity and quality food systems (S)

- 5.3.1 Perform functions related to purchasing, production, and service of food that meet nutrition guidelines, cost parameters, and health needs (S)
- 5.3.2 Perform human resource functions to achieve goals (S)
- 5.3.3 Perform foodservice budget activities to achieve financial goals (S)
- 5.3.4 Apply workplace safety principles to identify and mitigate safety hazards (S)
- 5.3.5 Analyze organizational needs, including workforce, equipment, space, and technology, to ensure sustainability (S)
- 5.3.6 Analyze the workflow design and make recommendations to improve system efficiency (S)

- 5.3.7 Develop disaster planning protocols to ensure safe and continuous food service (S)
- 5.3.8 Conduct a facility analysis of equipment based on resource availability, anticipated future growth, and sustainability (S)

5.4 Apply knowledge of purchasing, receiving, and storage of food products (S)

- 5.4.1 Identify inventory management principles to ensure food production needs are met (S)
- 5.4.2 Manage the process of receiving and storing products, demonstrating adherence to food safety code guidelines and regulations (K)
- 5.4.3 Manage the relationship between forecasting and production as it pertains to recipe needs and organizational demand (S)



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