
ACEND Virtual Town Hall Meetings
April 16, 2024, 11:00 a.m. Central Time

Host: Rayane AbuSabha, PhD, RD
ACEND Executive Director
Presenter: James Swain, PhD, RDN, LD, FAND
Erin Norman, PhD, RDN, LMNT

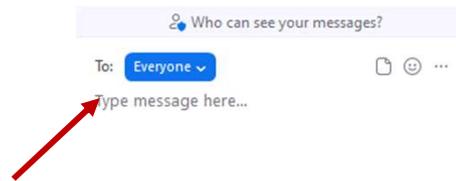


Webinar Recording Link:
<https://vimeo.com/935570027>

Rayane, James, and Erin thanked all attendees (174 participants). The meeting ended at 12:02 pm CT.

Welcome!

- Lines have been muted.
- If you have questions or comments, use the chat feature and post to EVERYONE.



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Using Chats During ACEND Town Hall

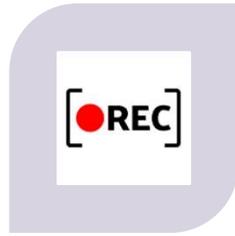


ACEND encourages attendees to use the chat feature to ask questions and express their opinions respectfully



At any point, ACEND reserves the right to remove an attendee from the Town Hall for inappropriate or harassing comments

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This webinar is being recorded



The slides and recording will be shared on the ACEND DEI webpage

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ACEND® Surveys of Supervised Practice/Experiential Learning Programs Students and Graduates (DIs, CPs)



Students and Advancing Education

- For U.S. and International Students
- Application Process for Students
- Individualized Supervised Practice Pathways
- Scholarships and Grants
- ACEND Board Dietetic Student Representative Application

[Learn About >](#)

- Two Email Communications
 - Student Exit Survey
 - Readiness to practice
 - Graduate Survey
 - Preparation and competence to practice
 - Employment

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Competency Management Software Updates

- Competency (formerly known as Competency.AI) Software Resource Page is Live!
- Final Testing and Updates: in progress
- Roll-Out Date: Early June 2024
- Competency questions? Please send an email to Education@eatight.org.

The screenshot shows the 'eatrightPRO' website with a navigation menu including 'About Us', 'Advocacy', 'Leadership', 'Practice', 'Career', and 'News Center'. The main content area is titled 'Competency Software for Program Directors'. It includes a sidebar with links to 'ACEND Portal', 'Application Process for Program Directors', 'IDPP for Directors', 'Program Director FAQs and Resources', and 'Competency Software Resources'. The main text states: 'Program directors are assigned to their ACEND accredited program under a Program Director role. Within Competency, Program Directors can create, edit and manage program schedules, users and assessment data, as well as create reports for dietitians, rubrics and supervisor hours. For additional information on software features and uses, please download the user guide below. For questions, please contact ACEND.' A prominent red button says 'Download User Guide for Program Directors'. Below this, there is a section for 'Getting Started with Competency' with a list of links: 'Getting Started with Competency', 'Creating, Mapping and Assigning Assessments', and 'Evaluating Students and Reviewing Reports'.

Resource Guides & Video Tutorials located under Program Directors page

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Navigating Microaggressions & Advocacy in Academic Settings DEI Webinar Now Available

- Please visit: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/about-acend/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>
- Attendee Evaluation Feedback:
 - *This was an amazing presentation, and I am excited to share it with my preceptors and interns. I appreciate the clear examples and specific recommendations. Thank you so much.*
 - *Very informative - I appreciate the actionable examples. Glad I attended. Thank you!*
 - *As a preceptor and ally, I am so appreciative of this opportunity. It was incredibly informative and helpful!*

Save the Date for Part 2 on November 19, 2024

The screenshot shows the 'ACEND' website with a navigation menu including 'About Us', 'Advocacy', 'Leadership', 'Practice', 'Career', and 'News Center'. The main content area is titled 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion'. It includes a sidebar with links to 'About ACEND', 'ACEND Mission and Vision', 'ACEND Board', 'ACEND Staff', 'ACEND Reviewers', 'Ad Hoc Panel for Appeals', 'Advanced Practice Residency Programs', 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion', and 'ACEND Data'. The main text states: 'ACEND® will not tolerate any instances of inequality nor discrimination in our nutrition and dietetics education programs. The links below provide information and resources to assist nutrition and dietetics faculty and preceptors on the topic of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). ACEND is in the process of developing a library of reputable educational materials on DEI. This page will be updated on a regular basis with new resources. If you need further assistance, please contact ACEND Staff.' A list of links includes: 'July 2020 Message from the ACEND Board', 'June 2020 Message from the ACEND Board', 'A Story on the Journey of Perseverance in Becoming a RDN Leader', 'Diversity Enrollment Trends', and 'Grant Opportunities for Dietetics Programs'. Below this is a section for 'Upcoming Webinars and Recordings' with a link to 'Check back soon for upcoming webinars and resources.' and a section for 'ACEND Series of Webinars on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' stating: 'ACEND offers a series of webinars to address diversity, equity and inclusion in its accredited programs. The webinars are free and provide 1-1.5 CPEUs each. All ACEND constituents (faculty, administrators, preceptors, students, interns, etc.) are invited to view.' A section for 'Recorded Webinars:' is also visible.

Webinars can be located under Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion page

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Dietetics Application Process

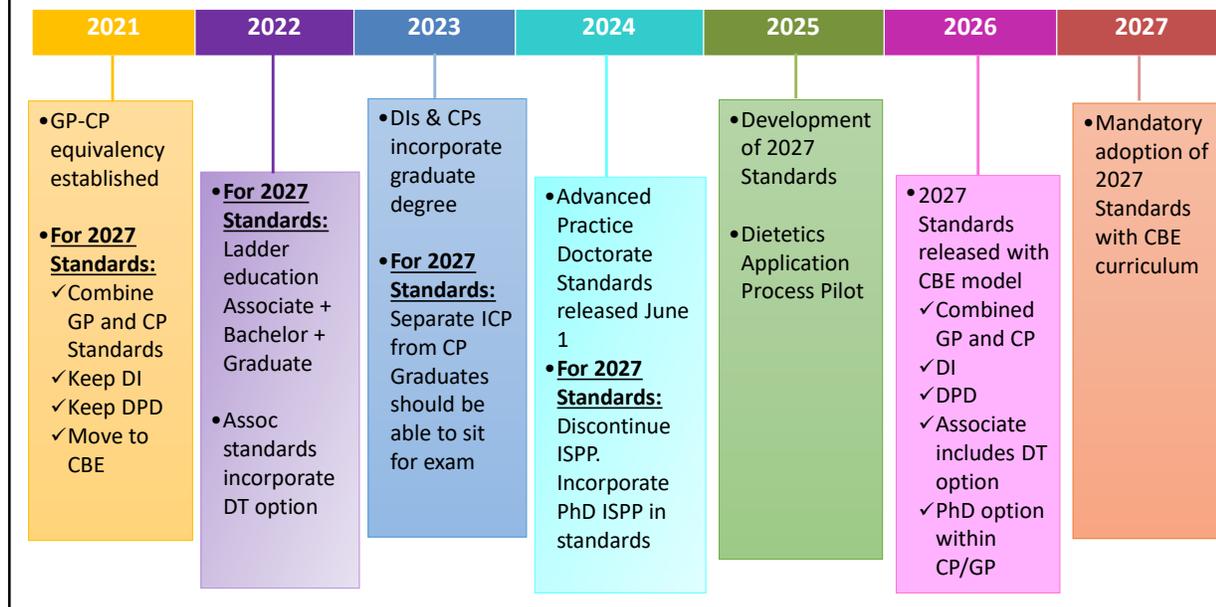
Required for all Supervised Practice Programs (ALL DIs, CPs, GPs)

- FALL Due Dates
 1. **November 1, 2024:** Applicant notification due date (last day).
 2. **November 15, 2024:** Applicant decision due date (last day).

- SPRING Due Dates
 1. **March 1, 2025:** Applicant notification due date (last day).
 2. **March 15, 2025:** Applicant decision due date (last day).

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ACEND STANDARDS TIMELINE 2021-2027- Board Decisions



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The Value of the ACEND DPD Programs



James Swain, PhD, RDN, LD, FAND
Associate Professor and Director, DPD
Case Western Reserve University
School of Medicine
Cleveland, OH



Erin Norman, PhD, RDN, LMNT
Associate Professor and Director, DPD
Chadron State College
Chadron, NE

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Introduction

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide timely, clear, and current information on the importance and necessity of DPD programs for the RDN Pathway and the Dietetics Profession.

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What is a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD)?

(From ACEND, 2024)

- A Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) refers to an academic program designed to meet the knowledge requirements for dietetics practice.
 - The DPD may be designed at the baccalaureate or advanced degree level.
 - Courses for the DPD must be part of the university requirements for whichever degree will be granted.
- Completion of a Didactic Program in Dietetics enables the individual to apply to a supervised practice program leading to eligibility for the registration examination for dietitians.



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DPD Importance (Rationale)

- The DPD's importance is related to the DPD providing a complete, proper, and foundational knowledge development framework.
- The DPD is the long-standing, complete educational foundation to prepare dietetics students for entry into Supervised Practice (the Dietetic Internship or DI).
- DPDs are structured to present content in a logical progression of flow, from basic to advanced knowledge and skills development, extensive in scope of nutrition and non-nutrition didactic knowledge.

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DPD Importance (Rationale) – cont.

DPDs contain essential Knowledge Requirements (KRDNs) - spanning both breadth and depth - essential for success in Supervised Practice.

- **Domain 1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice:** Integration of scientific information and translation of research into practice.
- **Domain 2. Professional Practice Expectations:** Beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the nutrition and dietetics practitioner level of practice.
- **Domain 3. Clinical and Client Services:** Development and delivery of information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations.
- **Domain 4. Practice Management and Use of Resources:** Strategic application of principles of management and systems in the provision of services to individuals and organizations.
- **Domain 5. Leadership and Career Management:** Skills, strengths, knowledge and experience relevant to leadership potential and professional growth for the nutrition and dietetics practitioner.

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DPD Importance (Rationale) – cont.

- DPDs are the most crucial phase of preparation for new dietetics students.
- DPDs are important because students must acquire and build in-depth didactic and nutrition knowledge **BEFORE** they become capable of applying and translating their knowledge to advanced competencies within Supervised Practice.



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DPD Importance (Rationale) – cont.

- The DPD is also the significant point of entry for new students to become RDNs.
- Many, if not most, students who decide to pursue the RDN credential develop an initial interest in the profession of dietetics upon introduction to the DPD.
- It is the significant pathway of new students into the profession.

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DPD Necessity (Rationale)

- The DPD's necessity is related to the value of the verification statement - verifying to DI Directors that a prospective student has acquired the required knowledge and is fully ready to both enter and perform successfully in a DI.
- If a student does not have a strong and properly developed foundation of didactic dietetic knowledge, they will not be able to interpret and perform at the graduate and supervised practice level.
- In other words, a dietetics student must understand the science and principles of dietetics to be able to move to more "showing" and especially, "doing" (types of competencies) in DIs.

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Nationally, the Vast Majority of Supervised Practice Program Capacity Requires a DPD Verification Statement



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Number of Supervised Practice Types Requiring a DPD Verification

(Source: ACEND, 11/2023, 2/2024)

- Nationally, 407 (vs 87) programs (~4.6x more internship programs) require the DPD Verification.

407 = stand-alone DIs, MS/DIs, etc.

87 = FEM (GPs)

Thus, 407 programs require DPD verification because they are not designed to provide what the DPD does - the extensive didactic coursework.

Note: There are currently 212 DPDs nationally.

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Breakdown of the 407 Supervised Practice Programs that Require DPD Verification: Current Number and Type

(Source: ACEND, 11/2023, 2/2024)

- MS/DI = grad degree required within the program = 161
 - DPD verified students enter, and grad degree is required by completion.
- DI with preselect from a graduate program = 42
 - Preselect into a DI from their current graduate program; so students have a DPD verification, are completing a grad (MS) degree, and then get pre-selected into the DI at that university.
- DI with Grad (MS) degree required on admission = 152
 - DPD verified students, with a grad degree, then accepted into the DI.
- DI with student-selected grad (MS) degree = 52
 - “Student-selected grad degree” - students have a DPD verification, are in a DI, but complete a grad degree (MS) during the program that they locate and complete.

Note - some of the above program types offer a combination of 1-4, but still require DPD verification.

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Current National (U.S.) Dietetics Student Enrollment - by Program Type

(Source: ACEND Program Enrollment and Stats, 10/2023)

Number of Students enrolled:

- DPD = 4703 (in the 212 DPD programs nationwide)
- DI (all types - stand-alone DIs, MS/DIs, etc.) = 3472
- CP = 787
- FEM (GP) = 374



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There are ~9x more students enrolled nationally in dietetic internship programs (all types of DIs) that require DPD verification

Calculation: 3472 (all types DIs)/374 (FEM-GPs) = 9.28

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Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

the accrediting agency for the
Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics



ACEND does NOT have any plans to discontinue the DPD

- ACEND does not have any plans to discontinue stand-alone DIs, MS/DIs, etc. and other DPD verification-requiring programs
- The vast majority of new RDN generating capacity comes from these programs
- Maintaining the majority of national educational capacity in dietetics is vital to national healthcare and the profession going forward.

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Regarding DI vs FEM-GP Type Programs and the DPD

- Stand-alone Dietetic Internships (DIs), combined MS/DIs, and others will continue to require a DPD verification statement.
 - ACEND does not have any plans to discontinue the stand-alone DIs, the MS/DIs, or the DPD - maintaining this capacity, nationally, going forward is vital to the profession of dietetics (RDNs).
 - Current and forecasted GPs total national capacity (# of spots) is not capable of supporting/generating the total numbers of new RDNs that the profession needs to maintain itself going forward.

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

the accrediting agency for the
Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics



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Regarding DI vs FEM-GP type programs and the DPD cont.

- Although many/most GPs do not require a DPD verification, students that do complete a DPD program (receive DPD verification) will be at a significant competitive advantage when applying to GPs.
 - DPD students have a **competitive** and **functional** advantage because they have completed all (if DPD verified) or most (if DPD in-process) of the GP's knowledge and didactic prerequisites.
 - Most GPs recognize coursework that DPD students have already completed, granting equivalency credit, thereby potentially reducing time in the GP program.
 - (Source: From ACEND 11/2023)
 - Thus, many GPs seek (prefer) students with a DPD verification.



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DPD Tie-In to RDN Employment Forecasting

- Currently, it is estimated that there will be approximately ~5600+ new job openings for dietitians/nutritionists each year going forward.
 - (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Outlook Handbook, 9/2023)
- There continues to be great need for new RDNs to enter the profession.
 - Because there are approximately ~4500 new RDNs credentialed each year, the Academy, ACEND, CDR, and USDE recognize the importance of maintaining capacity.



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...DPD programs provide the majority capacity for pathways generating new RDNs

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DPD is Vital to Maintain National New RDN Capacity

- In sum, DPD verification is required by ~4.6x more types of DIs nationwide, with ~9x more students enrolled nationally in such programs (vs. FEM-GPs).
 - This is where the majority of national dietetics educational capacity is located.
 - Projected to continue to be the major route for new RDNs into the profession.
- It is in the interests of the Academy, ACEND, CDR, USDE, US Dept. of Labor, and federal/state healthcare agencies to maintain the national capacity of existing DPDs and types of DI programs that require DPD Verification into the future - to meet supply of the U.S. RDN licensed workforce.

Dietitians have fought long and hard to establish a strong leading presence in clinical, community, and food service practice settings – a decrease of national capacity would lead to a rapid loss of scope of practice.

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Guidance for DPD Directors - Both Existing and New Programs



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Tips and Tools (Existing and Newer DPD Program Directors)

- Educating Chairs, Deans, etc. about DPD programs
 - Benefit of accredited program for students
 - Financial benefit
 - Student outcome benefits
 - Established pathways for RDN licensure
 - Marketing and recruitment benefits
 - Recruitment and retention benefits - help with ebb and flow of college attendance
 - DPD is a long-standing, impactful step in the RDN process

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Useful Resources When Talking With Administrators

Useful Websites:

- <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/students-and-advancing-education/career-information/faqs-about-careers-in-dietetics>
- https://www.neche.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Pp63-Role_and_Value_of-Accreditation.pdf
- <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs>
- https://www.chea.org/sites/default/files/other-content/pres_ltr_value_accrd_5-03.pdf

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Administrators should be informed of the many benefits of accredited programs, such as the DPD

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Benefits of Accreditation

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

- Over time, accreditation has come to play four pivotal roles in U.S. society*.

Accreditation:

1. Sustains and enhances the quality of higher education
 - a) Gatekeeper for a *Threshold Level* of Quality
 - b) Primary Incentive for *Quality Improvement*
2. Maintains the academic values of higher education
3. Is a buffer against the politicizing of higher education
4. Serves public interest and need

Maintaining accredited DPD programs preserves these values.

*Source: CHEA, 2003

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Benefits of Accreditation

New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)

- To the public, the values of accreditation include:
 - Assurance of external evaluation and confirmation of quality of a program related to field of profession.
 - Identifies programs and institutions that have activities aimed at providing quality programs.
 - Shows a program has an active process of continuous quality improvement
 - Illustrates that a program is continuously updating itself, based on new knowledge and practice in field.
 - Decreases need for oversight from other public agencies, since accreditation confirms and sets standards.

Source: NECHE: Role and Value of Accreditation

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Benefits of Accreditation

New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) – cont.

- To students, accreditation provides:
 - Assurance that a program's educational activities and content meets students' needs.
 - Assistance in the transfer of credits and equivalencies between institutions.
 - Also, supports students as they pursue admission to advanced degree programs.
 - The accredited program is often a prerequisite for admission to entering the profession.

Source: NECHE: Role and Value of Accreditation

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Benefits of Accreditation

New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) – cont.

- Institutions of higher education benefit from accreditation through:
 - Required self-evaluation, the feedback loop, and continuous program development.
 - Assessments and guidance provided by the accreditor.
 - Helping guard against external encroachment into program's area of expertise by non-accredited programs.
 - Support of program quality by providing achievement benchmarks independent of forces that may impair or undermine the individual institution.
 - Enhancing the reputation of the institution through greater public recognition.
 - Increased eligibility of the program, its faculty and students, and institution itself, to participate in federally funded programs.
 - Marketing and recruitment via the accredited program.

Source: NECHE: Role and Value of Accreditation

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Benefits of Accreditation

New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) – cont.

- Accreditation serves the professions by:
 - Enabling participation of practitioners in setting requirements for preparation of the profession's entrance requirements.
 - Creating unity within the profession by bringing practitioners, teachers, and students together within the framework of the accreditation process and ongoing educational and professional interaction and development.

Source: NECHE: Role and Value of Accreditation

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Working With Your Administration

- Stress the Quality of DPD Programs
 - Based on established standards
 - Longstanding knowledge of standards
 - Recruitment of quality faculty
 - RDN teaching to expertise – can be marketing/recruitment angle
 - Allows you leverage and push back on system rules and regulations with the help of ACEND
 - Allowance for the development of necessary coursework
 - Guidance on criteria to teach
 - Improves the quality of coursework and production of competitive students
 - Helps with argument against cutting corners to maintain quality education



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Student Recruitment for DPD Programs: Working with Community Colleges

- Working with community colleges to set up pipelines into DPD programs.
- Offering information sessions to students at community colleges.
 - Has been shown to be a very productive recruiting strategy.
- Sending letters and information packets to high school programs.
- Offering “DPD Open Houses” and “Virtual Events”.



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Student Recruitment for DPD Programs

- Marketing strategies
- Benefits of longstanding relationships with DPD alumni who serve as ambassadors for profession
- Working with MS/DI or GP programs to create pipelines for DPD students
 - Programs that guarantee acceptance into GP or MS/DI programs.
 - Scholarships or dual credit courses.



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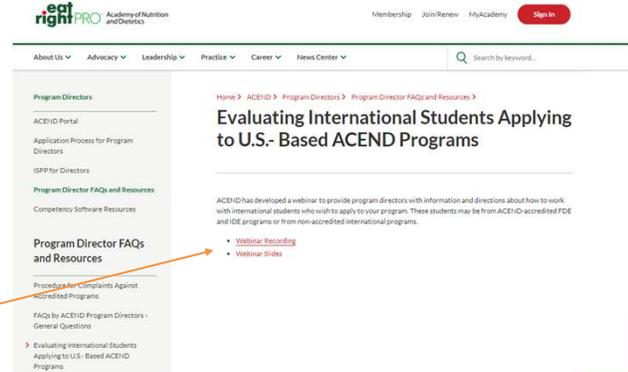
Student Recruitment for DPD Programs – Cont.

- Use data and statistics to promote your program
 - DPD self-study statistics
 - GP & DI statistics on programs that require DPD verification, student success rates, etc.

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FDE and International Programs Resources

- Benefits of offering DPD verification to international students as a pathway to U.S. RDN credential.
 - After transcript evaluation, students complete remaining DPD coursework in program
- Useful Websites:
 - Guidance on Accepting International Students (Recording)
 - <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/program-directors/program-director-faq-and-resources/accepting-international-students-into-an-acend-accredited-program>



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Benefits of DPD Beyond Requirement for DIs

- Flexible job prospects
- Clinical (DT-exam), community, food service systems
 - Immediate employment opportunities post graduation
- Preparation and increased competitiveness for Graduate School – MS and PhD

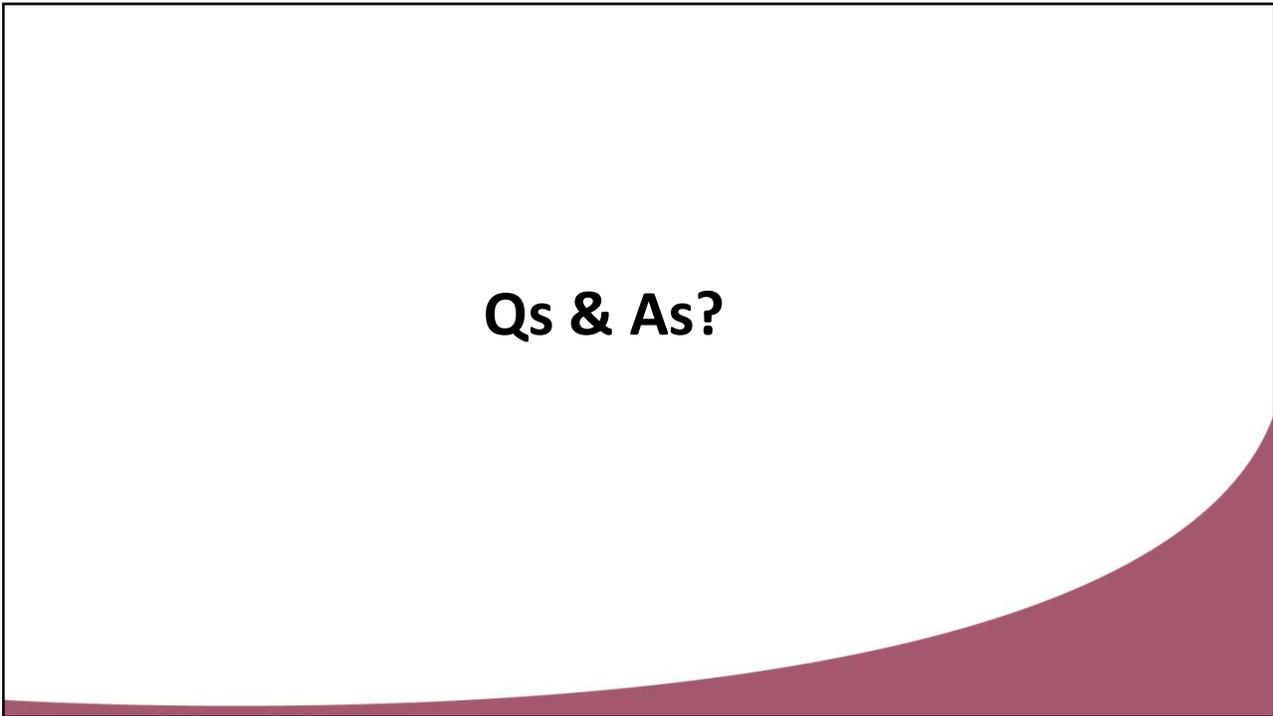


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