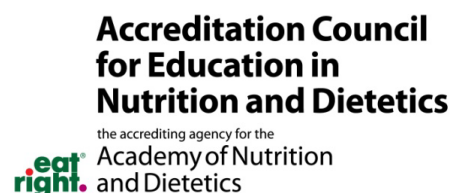

ACEND Virtual Town Hall Meeting
April 15, 2025, 11:00 a.m. Central Time

Host: Rayane AbuSabha, PhD, RD
ACEND Executive Director
Presenter(s): Cheryl Bacon, PhD, RDN, LDN, FAND



Webinar Recording Link:
<https://vimeo.com/1076749220>

Rayane and Cheryl thanked all attendees (244 participants). The meeting ended at 12:02 PM CT.

The following topics/questions were answered live during the town hall:

- DICAS application process and timeline
- DICAS coupon codes
- Purpose of the possible shared decision report
- Rolling admissions
- Traffic rules
- Survey data
 - If you have not already done so, please provide input: [Dietetics Application Process Feedback Survey for Program Directors and Faculty: Pilot 2024-2025 Application Process](#)
- Program Director Resources
 - <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/program-directors/application-process-for-program-directors>
 - <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/program-directors/application-process-for-program-directors/dicas-training-page>

Below are the questions that were not able to be answered during the live town hall meeting and have been answered below:

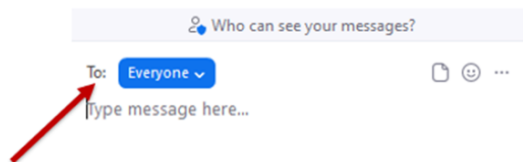
- Q. How do we handle deferrals?
 - A. Programs should follow their own procedures for deferrals. Should an applicant defer their position to a future cohort, the program must ensure that their enrollment for that cohort does not exceed their approved maximum enrollment.
- Q. Will data about overall enrollment in DIs/GPs become available?
 - A. ACEND data on enrollment statistics is available to the public on our website located here: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/about-acend/acend-data>
- Q. Is there a tutorial on the shared decision report?
 - A. Since the shared decision report is not available for this cycle, training has not yet been developed. As with any new feature within DICAS, trainings, webinars and tutorials will be made available.

- Q. Is there data on students accepting one program offer and then backing out for another program?
- A. ACEND does not collect that information; however, this is expected in a student-centered approach. Applicants look for the program that best fits their needs. Programs with a fall semester start date that open their application in the fall and follow the Fall Key Dates are at greater risk of losing applicants if these applicants' first choice is a program that follows the Spring Key Dates. Programs can always require a modest monetary deposit from applicants for reserving their spot that is non-refundable after the applicant decision date. Applicants would forfeit this deposit if they decline the offer and accept another offer at a later date.
- Q. How is the timeline accounting for the timing for DICAS to process materials and share to the program?
- Many students complete their application by midnight of the deadline, but the program may not have complete applications until well past that initial due date, encroaching on the notification deadline.
- A. Applicants that have paid for and submitted their application to a program, but have not had all the required documentation added yet will show up as a "received application". Materials that are not yet included in the application will likely be transcripts, references or both still waiting to be processed. These items are often out of the control of the applicant, which is why they are able to submit their application without these materials. Once the materials are added to the application, the application will move into a "complete" status. On average, it takes up to five business days for a transcript to post to an application from the date DICAS receive it. It is up to the applicant to continue to check that these have been submitted and added to their application. Programs may choose to begin reviewing "received applications" as those additional materials may be submitted. Programs can also check with the applicant to ensure that those materials have been requested.
- Q. Can we accept new applications from March 15 - July 31?
- A. Yes, programs with available positions may reopen their DICAS application for interested applicants by changing their application due dates, allowing applicants to submit their application.
- Q. Just to clarify, if an applicant accepts an offer before Nov. 15 or March 15, they have until Nov. 15 or March 15 to rescind their acceptance, correct?
- A. An applicant can accept or rescind an offer anytime throughout the process; however, the program must not require a decision from the applicant until November 15th or March 15th. In the Applicant Traffic Rules, it is stated that if an applicant has decided before November 15 (Fall) or March 15 (Spring) not to attend a program that has offered admission, the applicant must promptly withdraw their application from the program(s) by contacting the program director. Additionally, once an applicant has accepted an offer, if offered admission to other programs, the applicant MUST contact the program director(s) to decline offer(s).
- Program and Applicant Traffic Rules are posted to the ACEND website:
<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/program-directors/application-process-for-program-directors>
<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/students-and-advancing-education/application-process-for-students>
- Q. Is it possible for a DPD (as opposed to a DI) to purchase coupons for students to use for an application to any DI?
- A. No, the coupon codes can only be purchased by a supervised practice program to be used on their own program's application.

- Q. When you saw that increase in fall applications are those for students that might not start until the following fall?
- A. The Fall application numbers noted on the slide could be for students starting in the winter 2025, spring 2025 or fall 2025.
- Q. Can programs with internal applicants require a deposit prior to March 15th?
- A. Yes, if a program has an internal applicant within the same institution, the program can determine its own due dates for acceptance and deposits for example.
- Q. My program (MPH) application is going to have to be 2-stepped now, MPH applicant deadline is April 15th. How will I handle this?
- A. Programs can set their applicant decision date any time after the Spring Key Date of March 15. March 15 is the “earliest date” a program can require a decision from an applicant for the spring.
- Q. This process is very undergraduate and former match system focused. - which is odd since we are now requiring a graduate degree. Can the task force engage with the existing graduate programs to incorporate more graduate school norms? This step seems to have been skipped.
- A. This Dietetics Application Process mirrors most other health professions’ admissions process. All of those health professions are at the master’s or the doctorate level and use a similar process. The task force has provided multiple town halls, presentations at the NDEP meeting and FNCE, round table discussions, ACEND Update articles, and solicited input from all programs in surveys, via email, and through personal communications. The process has been revised and updated based on the feedback received. The Task Force continues to collect feedback and will review all feedback to continuously review and improve the process as needed.

Welcome!

- Lines have been muted.
- If you have questions or comments, use the chat feature and post to **EVERYONE**.
- To enable closed captioning, select **Show Captions** icon **CC** from the meeting controls toolbar.



Using Chats During ACEND Town Hall

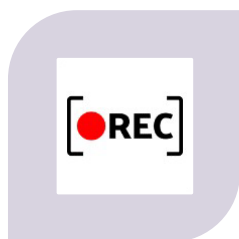


ACEND encourages attendees to use the chat feature to ask questions and express their opinions respectfully



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

© ACEND



This webinar is being
recorded



The slides and recording
will be shared on the
ACEND webpage

Upcoming ACEND Program Director Training

- **Register Now:** Join us for the virtual Accreditation Workshop (live) for the 2022 and FEM Standards
- **Dates:** May 20-21, 2025
- **Cost:** \$375 per attendee; \$250 for new directors of ACEND-accredited programs.
- Please visit the ACEND website for more information.

[Home](#) > [ACEND](#) > [ACEND Training and Volunteer Opportunities](#) > [Program Directors](#)

Program Directors Training Opportunities

This page highlights webinars and workshops that are designed for program directors.

Additional information for program directors can be found on the [Program Directors page](#).

ACEND® New Program Director Webinar

This webinar is designed to provide new program directors of ACEND-accredited programs information about the principles of ACEND accreditation and program director responsibilities. The webinar also reviews the resources available for program directors. Note: This webinar does not offer any CPEs.

- [View Webinar](#)
- [PDF of Webinar](#)

Program Director Workshops

The Program Director workshops are designed to help dietetic education program directors learn the latest accreditation standards and specific details on how to prepare for self-study reports and site visits. Individuals interested in applying to start a new ACEND program, as well as newly appointed program directors, are welcome and encouraged to attend and may be eligible for a registration discount. If you meet the discount requirements as outlined in the [ACEND fee schedule](#), contact [ACEND](#) for a discount code before you register. Note: After October 2023, ACEND no longer offers the Clinical Skills Workshop. For inquiries about Academy-provided workshops, including future clinical skills workshops, please [contact the Academy's Center for Lifelong Learning team](#).

- [Workshops Covering the 2022 and Future Education Model Accreditation Standards](#)
- [Recorded Workshops Covering the ACEND® 2022 and Future Education Model Accreditation Standards](#)
- [ACEND Competency Based Education and Assessment Training](#)

Workshops Covering the 2022 and Future Education Model Accreditation Standards

Dates and Time

- Tuesday, May 20, 2025 | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Central time)
- Wednesday, May 21, 2025 | 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Central time)

All meetings are virtual.

Dietetics Application Process Task Force Update

Cheryl Bacon, PhD, RDN, LDN, FAND

Session Objectives

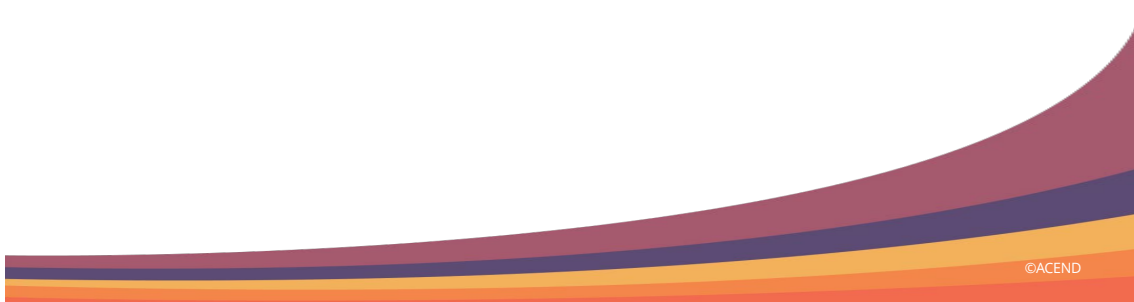
- Understand the application process for admission into supervised practice programs in dietetics.
- List three key dates within the dietetics application process.
- Identify trainings and tools that support the admission process.

PIs: 4.2.1, 4.2.6, 6.5.5

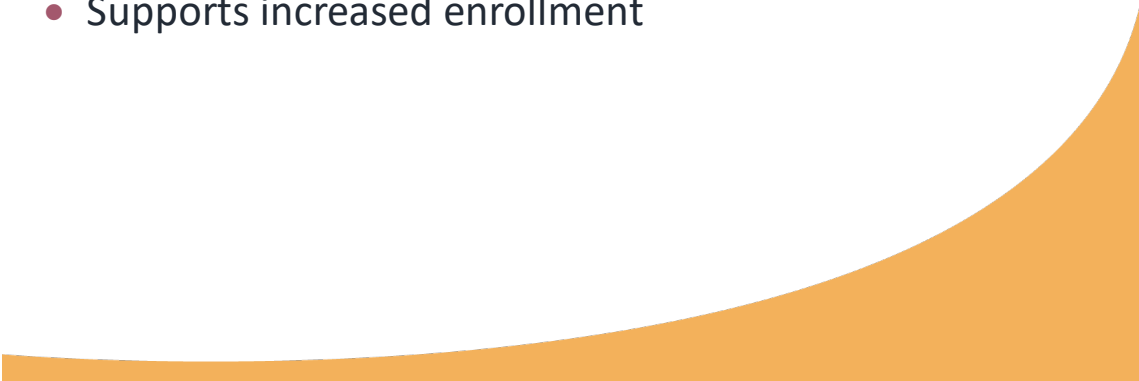


Disclosures

- Cheryl Bacon is a director of a free -standing, hospital-based dietetic internship program. She also recently served as past chair on the ACEND board of directors and is now serving as the chair of the Dietetics Application Process Taskforce.



Dietetics Application Process

- Focus is on process being student-centered
 - Familiar: similar application process to apply to undergrad programs
 - Streamlines pathways
 - Allows the student choice
 - Supports increased enrollment
- 

Notification and Decision Dates

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

- If your application due date is any time before Nov 1st, use the Fall Key Dates
 - **FALL Key Dates:**
 1. **November 1st:** Applicant notification date.
 2. **November 15th:** Applicant decision date.
 3. **December 15th:** Last day to extend offers for Fall applicants.
 - After Dec 15 programs must adhere to the Spring Key Dates
- 

Notification and Decision Dates

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

- If your application due date is any time between Nov 2nd and Mar 1st, use the Spring Key Dates
- **SPRING Key Dates:**
 1. **March 1st:** Applicant notification date.
 2. **March 15th:** Applicant decision date.
 3. **March 16th:** Spring Open Enrollment begins.
 - During Open Enrollment, programs set their own application notification date and their own applicant decision date

Throughout the Application Cycle

- Programs may continue to market and recruit applicants.
- Program openings can be offered to waitlisted applicants as they become available.
- Programs with available positions may reopen their DICAS application for interested applicants by changing their application due dates, allowing applicants to submit their application.
 - Programs must still adhere to the key dates for fall and spring

2025-2026 Cycle

- ALL Supervised Practice Program **MUST** Participate in DICAS
 - Does not apply to applicants selected within the same institution
- **Configuration portal opens** for programs early-April 2025
- **Configures application** in WebAdmit by July 16, 2025 for programs who want to be live by open date
- **Opens application** on Aug 5, 2025 (or after)
- **Program Sets application due date**
- Program **notifies applicants of decisions** (accepted, waitlisted, rejected) on or before November 1/March 1 (key due date)
- **Requires decision** by November 15/March 15 (key due date)

Program Traffic Rules

- Available on the ACEND website
- Traffic Rules for Applicants and Programs
 - Decision Dates
 - Guidance on required communication for accepting and declining offers
- Reminder to share Traffic Rules with Applicants

Dietetics Applicant and Program Traffic Rules

These traffic guidelines have been established by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) Dietetics Application Process Task Force and approved by the ACEND Board. These traffic rules represent the guidelines under which the nutrition and dietetics supervised practice programs [Dietetic Internships (DIs), Coordinated Programs (CPs), and Graduate Programs (GPs)] and their institutions have agreed to conduct the annual admissions process.

A. Applicant Traffic Rules

Applicants to dietetics programs, although some are not yet members of the dietetics profession, are bound to legal and ethical standards of behavior during the admission process.

TRAFFIC RULES FOR ALL APPLICANTS:

Program Traffic Rules

- As noted in the ACEND Policy and Procedure Manual (Policy 1.6M), any non-compliance with the ACEND Standards and/or ACEND policies will be reviewed by the ACEND Board for possible action.

M. All ACEND-accredited supervised practice programs must abide by the dietetics application code of conduct, traffic rules, and published applicant notification date and applicant decision date and must participate in the Dietetics Inclusive Centralized Application System (DICAS).

1. The deadline dates and participation in DICAS requirements do not apply to applicants selected within the same institution (e.g., Sophomore CP student applying to a CP for their junior year; DPD-DI in same institution; DI programs accepting their own employees into the program).
2. The ACEND Board will review any program that is deemed out of compliance and may take action according to Policy 2.4.

DICAS Application Statistics per Cycle

	2023-2024 Application Cycle	2024-2025 Application Cycle
Number of Applicants	2,226	2,792
Applications submitted	4,608	6,071
Fall	1,997	4,104
Spring	2,611	1,967
Average number of applications per applicant	2.38	2.87
Total number of participating programs	319 (26 GPs)	355 (51 GPs)

Feedback on Pilot Program Directors and Faculty Survey

Survey posted for program directors and faculty to provide feedback during the pilot process.

- 19 Responses since October 2024

Key Takeaways

- New process; needs time to increase familiarity
- Requires added communication
- Shorten the 2-week timeframe between offer and decision
- Strengthen the Traffic Rules for applicants to improve communication for PD ease of mind
- Requested more transparency within DICAS regarding where applicants were accepted to (Shared Decision Report)

Feedback on Pilot Applicants' Survey

Survey posted for applicants to provide feedback.

- 38 responses since October 2024

Key Takeaways

- High satisfaction:
 - 74% satisfied/very satisfied
 - 23% somewhat satisfied
 - 3% somewhat dissatisfied (n=1 indicated an issue with DICAS)
 - 0% neutral or dissatisfied
 - 87% did not face barriers
- Majority of comments were about DICAS
- Differing application dates were confusing
- Misunderstanding that applicants are bound to their decision if accept a program in the fall

Comment from an applicant

I think the fact that students get to make the decision in where to apply for and which programs to say yes to once accepted is a BIG PRO. Similar to the undergraduate application processes, I strongly appreciate that the decision was moved into the student's hands rather than the program deciding the fate. It is OUR future overall, so it's only fair that it's OUR decision to make. Please do not ever go back to the matching process!

Process Is Student-Centered

What worked for applicants:

- Applying early
- Having the choice
- Waiting until the Key Notification Date to respond
- Rescinding their acceptance offer
 - Programs can require a non-refundable deposit to hold a spot

Continued Survey Feedback

- The DAP Task Force will continue to collect feedback
- Survey Links on the ACEND website



Program Director/Faculty
Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RYS6VKD>



Applicant Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RYMGXV2>

A Guide to DICAS: Dietetics Inclusive Centralized Application Service – Overview for Applicants

Available for programs: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/program-directors/application-process-for-program-directors>

Available for applicants: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/student-and-advancing-education/application-process-for-students>

References

- ACEND DAP and Code of Conduct and Traffic Rules for Programs:
<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/program-directors/application-process-for-program-directors>
 - ACEND DAP and Code of Conduct and Traffic Rules for Applicants:
<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/students-and-advancing-education/application-process-for-students>
 - ACEND Policy and Procedures Manual:
<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accreditation-standards-fees-and-policies/acend-policies-and-procedures>
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