Future Education Model Infographic

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND®) Board has released an infographic that was developed to help convey the differences in the type of work envisioned for graduates of the proposed Future Education Model Associate, Bachelor and Master Degree Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics.

- **Future master degree prepared nutrition and dietetics practitioner**
  - Prescribes Medical Nutrition Therapy, pharmacotherapy and integrative and functional nutrition
  - Facilitates inter and intra professional teamwork and collaboration
  - Develops and implements community, population and global nutrition programs
  - Reviews, evaluates and conducts research
  - Provides Medical Nutrition Therapy counseling that results in behavior change
  - Demonstrates leadership to guide practice
  - Assumes administrative, leadership and entrepreneurial positions in nutrition and dietetics
  - Credential available: Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)

- **Future bachelor degree prepared nutrition and dietetics practitioner**
  - Provides nutrition and wellness counseling for clients
  - Manages the production, distribution and service of food in foodservice operations
  - Develops evidence-informed nutrition communications
  - Assists clients with meal planning
  - Conducts cooking classes
  - Credential available: Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (NDTR)

- **Future associate degree prepared nutrition and dietetics practitioner**
  - Collects nutrition health monitoring information from clients in their homes for use by community RDNs
  - Helps organize farmer’s markets
  - Promotes access to community resources for clients
  - Assists clients with food label reading
  - Provides meal preparation tips
  - Potential for future credentialing as a nutrition health worker

Input Requested

Those who will be attending FNCE this year are encouraged to participate in two ACEND sessions. The ACEND Forum, which will be held on Sunday, October 16 at 10:00 am in the convention center Rm 160 ABC, will include an update and discussion on the work that ACEND has been doing on both the 2017 Accreditation Standards and the proposed Future Education Model Accreditation Standards. On Monday, October 17 at 11:00 am at the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel Marina Ballrooms I-IV, ACEND and CDR will host round table discussions to allow time for discussion on any issues of concern, including the future education model.

ACEND is collecting stakeholder comments on the draft proposed Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Associate, Bachelor and Master Degree Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics through an online survey at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FEMComments](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FEMComments) until November 28, 2016.

If you have comments about the infographic, please email those to acend@eatright.org.
Future Nutrition and Dietetics Practice

**Associate Degree Practitioner**

- **Degree Needed:** Associate
- **Eligible Credential:** NDTR
- **Tasks:** Nutrition Health Monitoring, Farmers’ Markets, Community Assistance, Food Label Reading, Cooking Together

**Bachelor Degree Practitioner**

- **Degree Needed:** Bachelor
- **Eligible Credential:** RDN
- **Tasks:** Wellness Counseling, Nutrition Communications, Foodservice Management, Meal Planning, Culinary Classes

**Master Degree Practitioner**

- **Degree Needed:** Master
- **Eligible Credential:** RDN
- **Tasks:** Prescribing Medical Nutrition Therapy/Pharmacotherapy, Administration/Leadership/Entrepreneurship, Global/Community/Public Health, Research, Medical Nutrition Therapy Counseling/Behavior Modification
For Additional Information

- Review back issues of the monthly ACEND Standards Updates that are posted on the ACEND Standards Committee Website www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards
- Participate in a monthly ACEND virtual town hall on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 2:00 pm CT; information on how to connect to the town hall is available at www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/Standards.
- Contact ACEND (acend@eatright.org; 312-899-4872).

Questions That Have Come to ACEND

Question: Is it possible to meet with an ACEND program manager at FNCE?

ACEND Response: ACEND program managers will be available at the ACEND booth Sunday – Tuesday at FNCE. There is a special time set aside for one-on-one consulting by ACEND program managers with program directors on Monday, October 17 at 10 am in the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel Marina Ballrooms I-IV. Please contact ACEND (acend@eatright.org) to schedule a meeting with a program manager.

Question: What are the key differences between the 2012 and 2017 Standards?

ACEND Response: Although the 2012 and 2017 Standards are similar in many ways there are several key differences. The total number of standards was reduced from 23 to 10 by combining similar standards. The language was changed from “guidelines” to “required elements” to help clarify that these elements were required. Flexibility was added to supervised practice allowing a portion of the hours to be from alternate sources such as simulation, case studies and role playing. The terminology for program level review was changed to program “evaluation” rather than program “assessment” to help differentiate program level outcomes evaluation from student learning outcomes assessment. Some new knowledge and competency requirements were added in areas such as critical thinking, informatics, mentoring and cultural competence. A complete list of the changes can be found in the crosswalk documents available on the ACEND website www.eatright.org/ACEND

Question: What is the time frame for the one-year pass rate; is it one year from when the student graduates?

ACEND Response: The one-year pass rate time period is a one year time period from the time the student first takes the registration exam; it is not a one year period after graduation. For example, if a student graduates in May and does not take the registration exam until August, the one year period for that student will run until the following August, not May. As long as that student passes the exam before the following August, s/he would show as passing in the one year pass rate for the program. This one year period differs for each student and the final one year pass rate data for a program for a given year is not complete until the following year when all students who first attempted the exam during that calendar year have had a one year period from that first attempt to pass the exam.

Question: Are Coordinated Program (CP), Dietetic Internship (DI) and Didactic Program (DPD) directors now required to get a doctoral degree? What degree do other professions with master’s degree programs require as the degree for their program directors?

ACEND Response: The 2017 Accreditation Standards for CP, DI and DPD programs indicate that the program director must have a master’s (not a doctoral) degree. This academic requirement in the 2017 Standards remains the same as it was in the 2012 Standards for all programs. CP, DI and DPD directors are not required to have a doctoral degree and there has been no discussion by ACEND suggesting that CP, DI, or DPD directors would need to have a doctoral degree in the future. ACEND recently released the draft standards proposed for the future education model associate, bachelor and master degree programs. These draft standards do indicate a doctoral degree as a requirement for the director of the future education model master’s degree program which integrates the academic and experiential learning components into one program. The requirement of a doctoral degree for the program director of a master’s degree program is consistent with other health professions (nursing, allied health education, counseling, exercise physiology, occupational therapy, social work). Educators are encouraged to comment on the draft future education model standards at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FEMComments.

ACEND ensures the quality of nutrition and dietetics education to advance the practice of the profession.

10/5/2016
**Question:** Required Element 5.2a in the 2017 Standards indicates that pharmacology, statistics, logic and integrative and functional nutrition need to be included in the curriculum; can you clarify how much of each needs to be covered?

**ACEND Response:** ACEND expectations for all of the components listed in 5.2a are that the components be addressed somewhere in the curriculum but covering the component does not mean a course is required. Program directors and faculty make the decision on what depth of preparation is needed on all of the topics and where that component will be taught to prepare students to demonstrate the required knowledge and competencies. ACEND views pharmacology (i.e. effect of drugs on biological systems) as important to develop the understanding needed for the knowledge and competency requirements related to the Nutrition Care Process (KRDN 3.1). Use the Nutrition Care Process to make decisions, identify nutrition-related problems and determine and evaluate nutrition interventions and CRDN 3.1 Perform the Nutrition Care Process and use standardized nutrition language for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of settings. ACEND includes statistics, the analysis and interpretation of numeric data, to provide the needed background knowledge for the required competencies: CRDN 1.4 Evaluate emerging research for application in nutrition and dietetics practice and CRDN 1.5 Conduct projects using appropriate research methods, ethical procedures and data analysis. ACEND views the concept of logic (i.e. being able to reason, analyze and construct valid arguments) as central to developing the foundation for several of the knowledge and competency requirements (KRDN 1.3 Apply critical thinking skills; CRDN 1.3 Justify programs, products, services and care using appropriate evidence or data; KRDN 2.7 Demonstrate identification with the nutrition and dietetics profession through activities such as participation in professional organizations and advocating for issues impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession; CRDN 1.4 Evaluate emerging research for application in nutrition and dietetics practice; CRDN 1.5 Conduct projects using appropriate research methods, ethical procedures and data analysis. ACEND views the area of integrative and functional nutrition as a newer area of expertise needed by dietitian nutritionists. It provides the background preparation to prepare students for the knowledge and competency requirements related to the nutrition care process (KRDN 3.1). Use the Nutrition Care Process to make decisions, identify nutrition-related problems and determine and evaluate nutrition interventions and CRDN 3.1 Perform the Nutrition Care Process and use standardized nutrition language for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of settings.)

**Question:** In the 2017 Standards for Internships, one of the new competencies is CRDN 4.10 Analyze risk in nutrition and dietetics practice. What content area was expected for this competency?

**ACEND Response:** ACEND expects that students can identify and analyze potential areas of risk within nutrition and dietetics practice. This analysis of risk could focus on any area of nutrition and dietetics practice and might include scenarios such as unsafe food handling, personal/institutional liability related to substandard practice or misconduct, or adverse clinical outcomes.

**Question:** Is completion of one future education model degree program required to enter a higher future education model degree program?

**ACEND Response:** Each of the future education model degree programs is intended to stand alone. ACEND did not set prerequisite requirements for the degree program rather Individual programs would set their own admission requirements. A future education model master degree program could for example, choose to require completion of the future education model bachelor degree program as a prerequisite, could require specific courses as prerequisites or could choose not to require any prerequisites.

**Question:** Why is the bachelor degree prepared practitioner called a “technician” in the future education model?

**ACEND Response:** There has been much discussion about what the title of the future education model bachelor degree prepared practitioner should be called. Currently the credential available from the Commission on Dietetic Registration for this practitioner is the nutrition and dietetics technician, registered (NDTR). ACEND has titled the standards, “Bachelor Degree Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics.” The types of work expected to be done by these future bachelor degree prepared practitioners include managing foodservice operations, providing wellness counseling, developing nutrition communications, and doing culinary classes and meal planning with clients. ACEND continues to welcome suggested titles for this practitioner. Add your suggestion to the survey found at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FEMComments](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FEMComments) or email ACEND (acend@eatright.org)

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10/5/2016
**Question:** What impact will the recommended future education model have on the cost of education for future students who want to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN)?

**ACEND Response:** Currently most students spend at least five years to prepare to become an RDN. Approximately 40% of students completing coordinated programs and 20% of students completing dietetic internships currently are paying tuition to complete a concurrent master’s degree program, another 25% of internship students are paying tuition to earn some graduate credit with the internship and many go on to complete their graduate degree. Less than 10% of students who complete an internship do not pay at least some tuition/fees to attend that internship. The exact cost of future education model programs is not yet known as demonstration programs have not yet been identified, but the cost of requiring a master’s degree for entry-level practice may not exceed what students are currently paying to complete a master degree in a coordinated program or with a dietetic internship.

**Question:** What impact will the proposed future education model have on student diversity in nutrition and dietetics programs?

**ACEND Response:** Ethnic diversity in student enrollment in ACEND accredited programs has increased over the past 10 years. Most notably, the number of Hispanic students has nearly doubled. ACEND talked with other health profession accreditors (Physical Therapy, Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy) who have moved their education requirements to a graduate level and learned that this change did not decrease student diversity in those professions. In pharmacy, for example, under-represented minority students (Black, Hispanic, Native American) were 10.6% of the student population in 1988, prior to implementing their practice doctorate degree requirement, and 11.4% in 2012 after implementation. Diversity of students currently enrolled in dietetic internships combined with a graduate degree (males = 10%; under-represented minorities = 9%) and in coordinated programs at the graduate level (males = 10%; under-represented minorities = 11%) is similar to the diversity of students in dietetic internship programs that do not offer a graduate degree (males = 8%; under-represented minorities = 9%). The future education model includes preparation for careers in nutrition and dietetics at associate, bachelor and master degree levels allowing students many options for entry into future nutrition and dietetics careers and facilitating professional growth and development through subsequent degree levels. ACEND Standards encourage programs to foster diversity in their student selection process. ACEND currently monitors and will continue to monitor student diversity in all accredited programs.

**Question:** How do ACEND’s accreditation standards align with CDR’s January 1, 2024 requirement that applicants taking the dietitian nutritionist registration exam will need a master’s degree?

**ACEND Response:** CDR has released an information sheet about student options for meeting the master’s degree requirement for taking the dietitian nutritionist registration exam after January 1, 2024 (see [www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org)). All of the options include graduation from ACEND accredited programs that provide the didactic and supervised practice preparation to become a registered dietitian nutritionist. Graduates with verification statements from ACEND accredited coordinated programs and dietetic internships that include completion a master’s degree and graduates with a verification statement from the future education model master’s degree programs will meet the 2024 RDN exam eligibility requirements. Graduates of ACEND accredited programs that do not include a master’s degree will need to complete a master’s degree in the field of their choice to meet the 2024 RDN exam eligibility requirements.