

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

COLLEGE of LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Health and Human Performance

University of Houston Dietetic Internship (UHDI) Program Intern/Student Handbook and Policy and Procedure Manual

Program Mission:

The mission of the University of Houston Dietetic Internship (UHDI) is to provide intensive, high-quality supervised practice experiences that will prepare a wide range of graduates for entry-level practice as Registered Dietitian Nutritionists.

Program Goal #1:

Program graduates will acquire the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to obtain professional credentials and enter dietetics practice as entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists.

Program Objectives for Goal #1:

MS/DI interns:

At least 80% of interns complete program requirements within 2 years or 6 semesters (150% of planned program length).

DI only interns:

At least 80% of interns complete program requirements within 40 weeks or 10 months (150% of planned program length).

Of graduates who seek employment, at least 80% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.

At least 90% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.

The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.

80% of employers who complete the employer survey will rate UH graduates' preparedness for entry-level practice as excellent or better.

Program Goal #2:

Program graduates will feel prepared to enter the workforce as entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists.

Program Objectives for Goal #2:

80% of program graduates who complete the exit survey will rate themselves as excellent or better related to preparedness for entry-level practice.

Intern Performance Monitoring (Required element 8.1a):

Interns are required to submit weekly summaries of their activities, competencies completed, hours accrued, and evaluations at the end of each rotation. The internship program director or assistant director will review and provide feedback regarding intern progress. If an intern is not progressing at an appropriate level and speed, a conference between the intern, program director or assistant directors, and preceptor will be initiated. Appropriate remedial steps will be taken including extending the time in the rotation if deemed necessary to achieve the level of competency at an entry level. The program is committed to retaining interns and additional time will be granted for remediation as needed. Failure of two rotations will result in termination from the program.

Interns are responsible for completing all internship documentation involving evaluations, projects, written assignments, and accrual of hours. All items assigned by internship program director or assistant directors and/or preceptors must be completed in the designated time frame. Preceptors are instructed to complete internship documentation to provide timely feedback on intern performance while in facilities.

Interns enrolled as students in the concurrent University of Houston (UH) graduate program (MS/DI option) are monitored utilizing the electronic platform/application EAB Navigate to provide progress reports on student performance. Faculty can initiate a progress report at any time during the semester. Faculty are urged to submit progress reports before the official reporting day, midpoint, and before the deadline to drop the course with a W grade. The EAB Navigate allows for faculty to identify students who are at risk of failing the course so that advising and other support staff can provide assistance that is not otherwise possible through the course. The alerts can be for (1) tardiness, attendance, unprepared for class, missing work, (2) lack of engagement in online/remote course instruction, (3) weak content performance, (5) weak academic writing, and (6) other non-academic or other concerns.

Intern Retention and Remediation (Required element 8.1b):

Concerns about an intern's performance in meeting program requirements are addressed promptly and adequately to facilitate the intern's progression in the program. If an intern is not progressing at an appropriate level and speed, a conference between the intern, program director or assistant directors, and preceptor will be initiated. Appropriate remedial steps will be taken including extending the time in the rotation if deemed necessary to achieve the level of competency at an entry level. The program is committed to retaining interns and additional time will be granted for remediation as needed.

Interns enrolled as students in the concurrent UH graduate program (MS/DI option) are also monitored utilizing the electronic platform/application EAB Navigate to provide progress reports on student performance. When a progress report is submitted by faculty, the student is sent an email letting them know that a progress report was submitted. A second email is sent the following day inviting the student to make an appointment with an Academic Counselor in LAUNCH (the UH Learning Center) to create an individualized academic support plan with recommended actions and referrals to UH and other resources. Once created, the academic support plan will be stored in the Navigate platform so that academic advisors and college leadership can view the plan and support the student. After the drop course deadline, LAUNCH will message students who had a progress report submitted but remain enrolled in the course to encourage the student to finish strong.

Supervised Practice Documentation (Required element 8.1c):

Interns are required to track and document all supervised practice hours in professional work settings and in alternate practice activities, such as simulation, case studies, role-playing, and hours granted for prior learning (if applicable) through the DI app. Hours should be documented and tracked on an ongoing basis as the intern progresses through the program.

Insurance Requirements (Required element 8.2a)

Interns are required to have professional liability, health, and automobile insurance. Professional liability insurance is provided by the UH and is included in tuition fees. Interns must provide evidence of health and automobile insurance upon acceptance to the program. A copy of the professional liability insurance certificate is kept with the program director and may be requested as needed.

Liability for Safety in Travel to and From Assigned Areas (Required element 8.2b)

Interns will be required to travel to and from assigned supervised practice sites and/or conferences. Fees accrued and safety precautions during travel are at the intern's expense, responsibility, and liability.

Injury or Illness While in Supervised Practice Sites (Required element 8.2c)

In most cases, interns will have access to onsite health care in the event of injury or emergency. Treatment costs will vary from facility to facility and are the responsibility of the intern. Due to the nature of the affiliation agreements between the UH and supervised practice facilities, interns do not qualify for worker's compensation due to injuries received on facility premises. If an intern encounters an emergency or other problem while in a supervised practice site, they should contact their program director or assistant director immediately.

Drug Testing and Background Checks (Required element 8.2d)

Interns are required to complete drug screens and background checks as required by the individual supervised practice sites. Failure of drug screen or background check will result in automatic termination from the program.

Interns are not Employees (Required element 8.2e)

Placement of interns in supervised practice settings is for the explicit purpose of attaining the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) core competencies through professional work experiences. Interns will not be used to replace employees in supervised practice sites.

Intern Compensation (Required element 8.2f):

Interns may not be compensated for hours accrued toward supervised practice during their enrollment in the UHDI program. Interns may work in the capacity of a work-study student or assistant within the university; however, this is outside of the purview of the program.

Process for Filing and Handling Complaints (Required element 8.2g):

Interns have a right to redress grievances. The internship program director and assistant directors are the primary contacts for problem-solving. Problems during rotations or with site preceptors should be discussed with the internship program director or assistant directors as soon as possible. However, it is expected that interns cultivate cordial and professional relationships with preceptors at all rotation sites.

Interns must first discuss the issue with the site preceptor and attempt to resolve it before bringing it to the internship program director or assistant directors. If an issue is not resolved to an intern's satisfaction after discussing the matter in a professional manner with both the site preceptor and internship program director or assistant directors, the intern may request a formal review by the Chair of the Department of Health and Human Performance.

The following is the complete order in which a grievance may be reviewed:

- Site Preceptor
- UHDI Program Director or Assistant Directors
- HHP Department Chair
- Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
- Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost

It is the policy of the UHDI that interns have a right to redress their grievances. The internship program director or assistant directors are the primary focus for problem-solving. Problems at a site or with a preceptor should be discussed with the program director or assistant directors as soon as possible. However, it is expected that interns cultivate cordial, professional relationships with the preceptor at the outset of any rotation.

Process for submission of Written Complaints to ACEND (Required element 8.2h):

If all other options with the program and institution have been exhausted without resolution, complaints related to program noncompliance with ACEND accreditation standards may be directed to:

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190
Chicago, IL 60606-6995
Tel: (800) 877-1600, ext: 5400
ACEND@eatright.org

Prior Learning Assessment (Required element 8.2i):

Interns may be granted credit for prior learning with evidence and provision of appropriate documentation of significant compensated work experiences that comprise similar learning experiences to those required by the ACEND core competencies statements in particular emphasis areas.

Prior learning is granted when evidence of six months of full-time paid work experience is substantiated with a letter on letterhead from the work supervisor outlining the intern's responsibilities in the employed position and an evaluation of ACEND core competencies fulfilled during the experience are completed. The work supervisor must be a Registered Dietitian/Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and the letter must include dates of employment, hours worked, job responsibilities and activities performed.

A maximum of four weeks of credit will be granted for prior learning. Only hours that meet or exceed the number of required hours for a particular rotation will be considered. No partial credit will be granted and no more than four weeks of rotations will be waived. There is no tuition fee reduction for prior learning waivers.

The final determination of assessment of prior learning is at the discretion of the internship program director and assistant directors.

Formal Assessment of Intern/Student Learning and Reports on Performance (Required element 8.2j):

Interns receive informal assessments of performance and progress throughout rotations by site preceptors on an ongoing basis. An informal midpoint assessment of ACEND core competencies is completed by the preceptor halfway through the supervised practice rotation to allow feedback and dialogue on intern strengths and areas of improvement. A formal assessment of learning is completed at the end of each supervised practice rotation by the preceptor which evaluates the ACEND core competencies and professionalism of the intern throughout the duration of the entire rotation.

Program Retention and Remediation Procedures; Interns Must Have Access to Remedial Instruction such as Tutorial Support (Required element 8.2k):

Concerns about an intern's performance in meeting program requirements are addressed promptly and adequately to facilitate the intern's progression in the program. If an intern is not progressing at an appropriate level and speed, a conference between the intern, internship program director or assistant directors, and preceptor will be initiated. Appropriate remedial steps will be taken including extending the time in the rotation if deemed necessary to achieve the level of competency at an entry level. The program is committed to retaining interns and additional time will be granted for remediation as needed.

Interns enrolled as students in the concurrent UH graduate program (MS/DI option) will also be monitored utilizing the electronic platform/application EAB Navigate to provide progress reports on student performance. When a progress report is submitted by faculty, the student is sent an email letting them know that a progress report was submitted. A second email is sent the following day inviting the student to make an appointment with an Academic Counselor in LAUNCH (the UH Learning Center) to create an individualized academic support plan with recommended actions and referrals to UH and other resources. Once created, the academic support plan will be stored in the Navigate platform so that academic advisors and college leadership can view the plan and support the student. After the drop course deadline, LAUNCH will message

students who had a progress report submitted but remain enrolled in the course to encourage the student to finish strong.

Faculty can initiate a progress report at any time during the semester and are urged to submit progress reports before the official reporting day, midpoint, and before the deadline to drop the course with a W grade. The EAB Navigate allows for faculty to identify students who are at risk of failing the course so that advising and other support staff can provide assistance that is not otherwise possible through the course. The alerts can be for (1) tardiness, attendance, unprepared for class, missing work, (2) lack of engagement in online/remote course instruction, (3) weak content performance, (5) weak academic writing, and (6) other non-academic or other concerns.

Interns and graduate students have access to the following tutorial support:

Student Resources: <https://www.uh.edu/online/students/student-resources.php>

LAUNCH (Undergraduate Student Success Center)—may also be utilized by graduate students:

<http://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch/services/>

Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.uh.edu>

Career Services: <https://www.uh.edu/ucs/>

Health and Human Performance Academic Advisor: <https://www.uh.edu/class/hhp/graduate-programs/graduate-counselor/>

Program Disciplinary/Termination (Required element 8.2I):

Interns may receive disciplinary action or termination from the program as outlined below:

Disciplinary action may result in:

- Suspension from the program for a time commensurate with the offense
- Suspension from the program for remediation of knowledge or other aspects of performance as determined by the internship coordinator or Program Director
- Termination from the program (see below)

Interns may be terminated from the program for the following:

- Repeated poor performance
- Not following instructions as requested
- Repeated absenteeism or tardiness
- Unprofessional or unethical conduct or violating the policies of the internship as set forth in this document or the internship contract
- Two rotation failures
- Non-payment of tuition
- Failure to pass drug screen or background check
- Other reasons as set forth in the internship signed contract

Grievance for removal from the UHDI must be initiated within 30 days of dismissal from the program.

Interns enrolled as students in the concurrent UH graduate program (MS/DI option) will also be subject to the UH disciplinary and termination process outlined in the UH Student Code of Conduct Policy. For details, please

visit the UH Student Code of Conduct website: <http://www.uh.edu/dos/behavior-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/>

Students failing to comply with the UH Student Code of Conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, expulsion, suspension, disciplinary probation, reprimand, or warning.

Graduation and/or Program Completion Requirements (Required element 8.2m):

MS/DI onsite and distance tracks:

For interns/students entering the UHDI without an existing graduate degree, a verification statement is awarded upon successful completion of the UHDI and MS requirements. The UHDI completion requirements include successful completion of 1000 hours of supervised practice, submission of all required UHDI documents, and successfully passing the UHDI exit exam in a maximum of two attempts with a score at or above 80% within 60 days of graduate degree completion. The MS completion requirements include (1) satisfactorily completing all courses in the degree with an overall and semester GPA of 3.0 or higher and must earn a satisfactory (S) grade in supervised practice hours AND (2) submitting completed capstone project in the form of an abstract, poster session, or other means of dissemination coordinated with the instructor.

The MS program is a cohort-based plan of study. Interns/students are required to enroll in courses as instructed by their academic advisor and must advance through a pre-determined curriculum in sequence with their cohort. Interns/students are required to remain in good academic standing to advance the subsequent semester with their cohort and progress in the program.

All MS/DI interns/students must complete the program within 2 years or 6 semesters of enrolling.

DI only non-degree onsite and distance tracks:

For interns/students entering the UHDI with an existing graduate degree a verification statement is awarded upon successful completion of 1000 hours of supervised practice, submission of all required UHDI documents, and successfully passing the UHDI exit exam in a maximum of two attempts with a score at or above 80% within 60 days of supervised practice rotation completion.

All DI only interns/students must complete the program within 10 months or 40 semesters of enrolling.

Verification Statement Requirements (Required element 8.2n):

A verification statement is an official document that certifies successful completion of the UHDI and the requirements of an ACEND accredited program. A verification statement is required for Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) credentialing exam eligibility.

Verification statements are awarded as noted below:

MS/DI onsite and distance tracks:

For interns/students entering the UHDI without an existing graduate degree, a verification statement is awarded upon successful completion of the UHDI and MS requirements. The UHDI completion requirements include successful completion of 1000 hours of supervised practice, submission of all required UHDI documents, and successfully passing the UHDI exit exam in a maximum of two attempts with a score at or above 80% within 60 days of graduate degree completion. The MS completion requirements include (1) satisfactorily completing all courses in the degree with an overall and semester GPA of 3.0 or higher and must earn a satisfactory (S) grade in supervised practice hours AND (2) submitting completed capstone project in the form of an abstract, poster session, or other means of dissemination coordinated with the instructor.

DI only non-degree onsite and distance tracks:

For interns/students entering the UHDI with an existing graduate degree a verification statement is awarded upon successful completion of 1000 hours of supervised practice, submission of all required UHDI documents, and successfully passing the UHDI exit exam in a maximum of two attempts with a score at or above 80% within 60 days of supervised practice rotation completion.

Verification of Intern Identity (Required element 8.2o):

Interns are required to provide a picture ID during orientation to verify identity. A copy is maintained in the intern file. The online exit exam is administered by access code only provided to the intern and a proctor is required to verify the intern's identity during the administration of the exit exam.

Interns enrolled as students in concurrent the UH graduate program (MS/DI option) program also utilize a Microsoft multifactor authenticator (MFA) to secure CougarNet accounts. Microsoft MFA allows the confirmation of identity by text message through an installed application on students' cell phones.

Microsoft MFA remembers trusted devices and locations, reducing how often students need to approve sign-ins on familiar devices. This minimizes disruptions during daily academic and work activities while maintaining strong security.

With Microsoft MFA and integrated authentication, student's CougarNet credentials provide secure access to multiple university applications through a single, verified login. This delivers a more streamlined experience without sacrificing protection.

As cyber threats continue to evolve, Microsoft MFA includes features like number matching to counter MFA fatigue attacks. This ensures only the student can approve legitimate login attempts, adding an active layer of defense for the entire campus community.

Complete details are located at: <https://www.uh.edu/infotech/services/multifactor-authentication/>

Withdrawal and Refund of Tuition (Required element 8.2p):

UHDI tuition is due in full prior to the start of orientation. Tuition is non-refundable regardless of the cause for the non-completion of the program.

Interns enrolled as students in the concurrent UH graduate program (MS/DI option) also utilize the UH withdrawal and tuition refund policy for courses. For policy details please visit the UH withdrawal policy website: <http://www.uh.edu/financial/undergraduate/how-apply/withdrawal-policy/>

Program Schedule (Required element 8.2q):

Regular attendance and punctuality at each practice site based on the individual site schedule and attendance to monthly virtual (onsite and distance) or in-person (onsite) internship meetings are mandatory. Interns are to observe the holiday schedules of the practice sites. Tardiness or truancy during supervised practice rotations may result in rotation failure.

Failed rotations must be repeated to receive supervised practice credit. Reassignment for failed rotations is at the discretion of the internship program director or assistant directors and site preceptor.

Personal leave for reasons other than medical, bereavement, religious requests, or emergencies is not permitted unless previously determined with the internship program director or assistant directors. Vacation time during the internship is not allowed. Interns must contact their site preceptor and internship program director or assistant director if they will be late or absent from their assigned rotation at any point.

Interns enrolled as students in the concurrent UH graduate program (MS/DI option) also utilize the UH Academic Calendar for schedules, vacations, and holidays. For UH Academic Calendar information, please visit the academic calendar website: <https://www.uh.edu/enrollment-services/registrar/academic-calendars/2025-2026/spring/>

The MS program is a cohort-based plan of study. Interns/students are required to enroll in courses as instructed by their academic advisor and must advance through a predetermined curriculum in sequence with their cohort. Interns/students are required to remain in good academic standing to advance the subsequent semester with their cohort and progress in the program.

Privacy of Intern Information (Required element 8.2r):

UHDI program complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For details, please visit the FERPA website: <http://www.uh.edu/dos/parents/resources/ferpa-explanation/>

Intern Access (Required element 8.2s):

Interns have access to their internship files at any time through their DI app login and password.

Interns enrolled as students in the concurrent UH graduate program (MS/DI option) also have access to their files through AccessUH and PeopleSoft with their private login, password, and Microsoft MFA.

For details, please visit the AccessUH website: <https://accessuh.uh.edu/login.php>

Intern Support Services (Required element 8.2t):

The UHDI is a self-funded non-academic program. As such, interns completing the DI only non-degree seeking option are not eligible for financial aid through the UH. Scholarships may be available through the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the state affiliate. It may be possible for interns to obtain loan deferment for student loans while enrolled in the program. The internship program director or assistant directors will work to provide the necessary documentation for interns requiring loan deferment.

Interns completing the DI only non-degree seeking option, are not enrolled students at UH and therefore may not be eligible for all university-sponsored student support services.

Interns enrolled as students in concurrent University of Houston graduate program (MS/DI option) may utilize a wide variety of support services offered by UH, including but not limited to health services, counseling and testing, and financial aid services. For details on the available student support services at UH, please visit the student resource website: <https://www.uh.edu/online/students/student-resources.php>