

# The University of Southern Mississippi



## **Student Handbook**

### **Didactic Program in Dietetics**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Didactic Program in Dietetics. We are pleased that you have decided to study Nutrition and Dietetics at Southern Miss. This handbook is designed to assist you in planning your course work and answer some questions that you may have. It has been prepared by the faculty as a source of frequently used information.

This student handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to be used in conjunction with the *University Bulletins* and the *Southern Miss Student Handbook*. It also is not intended to replace regular appointments with your adviser. Rather, it is meant to be a ready source of information for your use. Keep it handy. You will find that it answers a lot of your questions.

### **Program Mission, Goals and Student Learning Outcomes:**

The mission of the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) at The University of Southern Mississippi is to prepare students for careers as dietetics professionals who will enhance the quality of life for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities in the state, region, and nation. The DPD provides the knowledge, skills, and values required for successful entry into a supervised practice program, graduate school, or the job market.

### **Didactic Program in Dietetics**

#### **Program Goal 1**

To develop and maintain a high quality Didactic Program in Dietetics that prepares students for careers in dietetics and provides the knowledge, skills, and values for post-graduate education.

#### **Institutional Mission Reference (if applicable)**

The DPD provides the knowledge, skills, and values required for successful entry into a supervised practice program, graduate school, or the job market.

#### **Outcome Measures**

- 1.1 80% of DPD graduates who have completed supervised practice programs will pass the RD exam on the first attempt
- 1.2 80% of DPD graduates will be rated as outstanding or above average knowledge of nutrition and food systems, as evaluated by Dietetic Internship Directors.
- 1.3 75% of DPD graduates will indicate that they have adequate or more than adequate knowledge and skills related to nutrition and food systems to qualify for employment in dietetic and/or to further their education
- 1.4 90% of graduates applying for a dietetic internship or graduate school will be accepted within 1 year of graduation from the program.
- 1.5 75% of DPD graduates that do not pursue a dietetic internship will be employed in nutrition or food systems related area within one year of graduation.

#### **Program Goal 2**

To prepare students to contribute to the profession and be leaders at local, state, and national levels.

#### **Institutional Mission Reference (if applicable)**

To prepare students for careers as dietetic professionals who will enhance the quality of life for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities in the state, region, and nation.

#### **Outcome Measures**

- 2.1 75% of seniors will assume at least one leadership role during their undergraduate program
- 2.2 90% of seniors will participate in community service during their undergraduate program
- 2.3 80% of students will make a presentation at a local meeting, while 15% of students will make a presentation at a regional or national level meeting

### **Program Goal 3**

To develop a community of professionals that supports the needs of Mississippi and the southeast region of the United States

### **Institutional Mission Reference (if applicable)**

To prepare students for careers as dietetics professionals who will enhance the quality of life in the state, region, and nation.

#### **Outcome Measures**

- 3.1 85% of students completing the DPD will be residents of Mississippi or the Southeast region of the United States
- 3.2 75% of students who begin the DPD in their junior year will successfully complete the program and receive verification statements
- 3.3 20% of students completing the DPD will represent diversity within the profession (racial/ethnic minority or male)

### **Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate dietetic practice-related information, orally and in writing
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct research, present and apply research findings relevant to dietetics practice.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking skills to evaluate problems related to dietetic practice, synthesize relevant data, and identify solutions to problems.
4. Students will understand the role of nutrition in human health, disease prevention, and health promotion in a variety of settings.
5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of food systems, including management principles, financial management, menu planning and production, and food science.
6. Students will demonstrate professional ethics; collaboration, and participate actively in group efforts, demonstrating respect for other people's opinions, feelings, and values.

### **How to Become a Registered Dietitian**

There are three steps to becoming a registered dietitian (RD):

- Earn a bachelor's degree and complete the didactic program requirements for entry-level dietitians in an American Dietetic Association (ADA) accredited program
- Successfully complete an ADA accredited supervised practice program/dietetic internship
- Earn a passing score on the national Registration Examination for Dietitians

Southern Miss' degree program in Nutrition and Dietetics is designed to meet the ADA didactic requirements. Graduates of the program meet the academic requirements necessary for entry into a supervised practice program in the form of either an accredited Dietetic Internship (DI). After completion of an internship, graduates are eligible to write the examination for Registered Dietitian status.

## Accreditation Status

The Didactic Program in Dietetics at USM is currently granted initial accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the American Dietetic Association, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-5400.

## Admission Requirements

Admission requirements to the DPD are the same as admission requirements to Southern Miss.

The Office of Admissions requires the following from all applicants

- Application for Undergraduate Admission ([apply online](#) or submit a paper application)
- \$35 nonrefundable application fee from all applicants (application fee increases to \$100 after December 1 for spring applicants, May 1 for summer applicants, and July 1 for fall applicants)
- Official ACT or SAT scores
- Transcripts from high school for freshman applicants; transcripts from all institutions attended after high school for transfer applicants
- Documentation of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) immunization

## Transfer Requirements:

Students who do not meet freshman requirements must either have an associates degree intended for transfer or have completed the 24 semester hours of designated college course work outlined below, with at least a 2.00 G.P.A. for admission to the university. (Admission to some programs on campus may require students to meet additional requirements.)

6 semester hours of English composition

3 semester hours of college algebra or higher mathematics

6 semester hours of science (must be laboratory-based)

9 semester hours of transferable electives

## Four-Year Degree Plan

The following is a recommended four-year plan for completing the Nutrition and Dietetics degree. The degree plan for the 2008-2009 *Undergraduate Bulletin* is in the Appendix. This plan is meant to provide general guidance and is not to replace regular meetings with your adviser. Students majoring in Nutrition and Dietetics must meet the following criteria in order to progress through the program:

Students majoring in Nutrition and Dietetics must meet the following criteria in order to graduate and receive a verification statement:

- **Students must have completed BSC 250/250L and BSC 251/251L with a “C” or better and NFS 362 with a “B” or better in order to enroll in NFS 320/320L.**
- **Students must have completed all required science courses (CHE 106, CHE 106L, BSC 250, BSC 250L, BSC 251, BSC 251L, CHE 251, CHE 251L, CHE 420) with a “C” or better before enrolling in NFS 485/485L and must have a 2.5 overall GPA in these courses *in order to graduate***
- **Students must have completed all prerequisite courses with a "C" or better in order to enroll in all subsequent courses.**

- **Students must have a grade of “C” or better in the major area of study courses *in order to graduate.***

Many NFS courses have prerequisites. It is important that any prerequisites be completed prior to enrolling in a course. A minimum of 124 hours is required to complete the Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition and Dietetics.

In addition, starting with students enrolled in the 2007-2008 Bulletin, if any course in the dietetics curriculum is taken twice (2 times) and not passed with a C or better, the student will be dismissed from the DPD program.

**Degree Plan for a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics**  
**2008-2009**

<b>FRESHMAN YEAR</b>			
<b>Fall Semester</b>		<b>Spring Semester</b>	
<b>Courses:</b>	<b>Hrs</b>	<b>Courses</b>	<b>Hrs</b>
ENG 101 Composition One	3	ENG 102 Composition Two	3
PSY 110 General Psychology	3	HIS 102 World Civilization Since 1648 AD	3
HIS 101 World Civilization to 1648 AD	3	CHE 106, 106L General Chemistry	4
MATH 101 College Algebra	3	SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology	3
ART 130 /DAN 107/MUS 365/THE 100	3	COH 100 Concepts of Wellness	3
Total	15	Total	16
<b>SOPHOMORE YEAR</b>			
<b>Fall Semester</b>		<b>Spring Semester</b>	
BSC 250/ 250L Anatomy & Physiology I	4	BSC 251, 251L Anatomy & Physiology II	4
CHE 251/ 251L Elementary Organic Chemistry	4	ACC 200 Intro to Financial Accounting	3
ENG 203 World Literature	3	BSC 280 Microbiology	3
NFS 362 Nutrition	3	NFS 272, 272L Principles of Food Prep	3
NFS 365 The Profession of Dietetics	3	Elective	3
Total	17	Total	16
<b>JUNIOR YEAR</b>			
MGT 300 Management for Organization	3	CHS 440 Intro to Biostatistics	3
CHE 420 Principles of Biochemistry	3	NFS 330, 330L Communication Techniques	3
NFS 320, 320L Nutritional Assessment	3	NFS 385, 385L Medical Nutrition Therapy	3
NFS 430, 430L Experimental Foods	4	NFS 475 Food Production Management I	3
Elective	3	NFS 420 Life Cycle Nutrition	3
Total	16	Total	15
<b>SENIOR YEAR</b>			
NFS 410 Macronutrients	3	NFS 411 Micronutrients	3
NFS 463, 463 L Community Nutrition	4	NFS 445 Financial Management	3
NFS 465 Seminar	1	NFS 477, 477L Administrative Dietetics	3
NFS 476, 476L Food Production Mgt II	3	NFS 480 Current Issues in NFS	3
NFS 485, 485L MNT II	3	NFS 486, 486L MNT III	3
Total	14	Total	15

## Costs to Students

A description of costs is outlined on the Southern Miss website: (<http://www.usm.edu/bizserv/studentexpenses.html>). In addition to textbooks, other costs may be incurred as a requirement of a class, such as lab fees for chemistry, anatomy and physiology, and food preparation courses. Additional costs may include lab fees for nutrition classes, web supplements for courses, and laboratory coats. Students also are responsible for transportation to any class field experiences. Dietetic students are encouraged to become involved in the Student Dietetic Association; dues are \$12 per semester. Student membership in the American Dietetic Association (ADA) is encouraged; student member dues are \$49 per year. Many junior and senior students attend the annual meeting of the Mississippi Dietetic Association (MDA). A reduced registration fee for students is offered by MDA.

## Faculty Advisers

Dr. Kathy Yadrick is the Chair for the Department of Nutrition and Food Systems (NFS). Dr. Elaine Molaison is the Didactic Program in Dietetics director. Advising is an integral part of the successful completion of the Nutrition and Dietetics course of study. Students are assigned to faculty advisers their first semester in the program. Information about office hours held by faculty members may be obtained by phoning their office or the Department of Nutrition and Food Systems office (601-266-5377). A listing of faculty schedules, including office hours, is located outside of their offices.

Advisor	Office	Phone	E-mail Address
Dr. Denise Brown	FG 214	601-266-4504	<a href="mailto:denise.m.brown@usm.edu">denise.m.brown@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Carol Connell	FG 216	601-266-6341	<a href="mailto:carol.connell@usm.edu">carol.connell@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Bonnie Gerald	FG 220A	601-266-6207	<a href="mailto:bonnie.gerald@usm.edu">bonnie.gerald@usm.edu</a>
Ms. Holly Federico	FG 219B	601-266-6023	<a href="mailto:holly.federico@usm.edu">holly.federico@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Alan Higginbotham	FG 221	601-266-5184	<a href="mailto:david.higginbotham@usm.edu">david.higginbotham@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Elaine Molaison	FG 220C	601-266-6548	<a href="mailto:elaine.molaison@usm.edu">elaine.molaison@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Keith Rushing	FG 215	601-266-5871	<a href="mailto:keith.rushing@usm.edu">keith.rushing@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Jane Osowski	FG 219A	601-266-6153	<a href="mailto:jane.osowski@usm.edu">jane.osowski@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Kathy Yadrick	FG 214	601-266-4479	<a href="mailto:m.yadrick@usm.edu">m.yadrick@usm.edu</a>
Dr. Jamie Zoellner	FG 220B	601-266-4696	<a href="mailto:jamie.zoellner@usm.edu">jamie.zoellner@usm.edu</a>

The university designates a week during October and March for academic advisement for continuing students. The advisement and registration schedules are announced in classes and posted in campus buildings. Advising is required for all students prior to registration for classes each semester. Your adviser can help develop a semester-by-semester plan of study that will enable you to take courses in the proper sequence and graduate in the least amount of time.

## Policies and Procedures

Many policies and procedures have been established to assist you in your academic career at Southern Miss. Below are some of the university policies of which you should be aware and the page(s) in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* (UGB) or *Southern Miss Student Handbook* (SH) on which they are discussed. The *Undergraduate Bulletin* is available at <http://www.usm.edu/registrar/publications> and the *Student Handbook* is available at <http://www.usm.edu/union/studenthandbook.pdf>

## Policy

## Reference

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Withdrawal and refund of tuition and fees*	Undergraduate Bulletin
Scheduling and academic calendar*	Undergraduate Bulletin
Statement of equal opportunity	Undergraduate Bulletin
Protection of privacy information	Undergraduate Bulletin
Access to personal files	Student Handbook
Access to student support services	Undergraduate Bulletin
Graduation and/or program completion requirements	Undergraduate Bulletin
Grievance procedures	Student Handbook
Disciplinary/termination procedures	Student Handbook
Absence policies	Undergraduate Bulletin

\* *Class Schedule Guide* also contains this information

### **ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE ALSO CONSIDERED AS JUST CAUSE FOR IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL:**

1. Unauthorized removal, destruction, or theft of any property of the program, USM, clinical/management facilities, employees, or clients.
2. The use or unauthorized possession of any intoxicants (including all forms of alcohol), illegal drugs or narcotics on the grounds of USM or clinical/management facilities.
3. Unauthorized use, possession, or distribution of firearms, explosives, fireworks or knives on the grounds of USM or its clinical/management facilities.
4. Willful submission of false information or alteration of any records or reports.
5. Dishonesty (cheating, forgery, plagiarism, etc.).
6. Disclosure of confidential information or discussion of any client information with unauthorized personnel.
7. Negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty.
8. Willful disobedience or insubordination.
9. Abusing a faculty member, staff member, or fellow student (including abusive language).
10. Willful violation of laboratory safety or other laboratory policies.

A student may appeal any dismissal to the Appeals Committee.

### **Professional Attitudes and Values**

All students enrolled in the Didactic Program in Dietetics will be evaluated on their professional attitudes and values as well as leadership and decision making abilities by the faculty members. Some of the items that may be evaluated include (but are not limited to):

- Readiness & preparation for class
- Initiative
- Completing assignments accurately and on time
- Participation in group activities and classroom discussion
- Level of personal effort
- Accepting constructive criticism
- Seeking assistance from faculty members (as needed)
- Attentiveness in class
- Courtesy toward instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students
- Keeping appointments
- Making decisions based on information and acting on the decision
- Assuming leadership roles, as appropriate to the situation

## **Transportation**

Transportation to and from supervised practice experiences as well as field trips and classes away from campus throughout is the total responsibility of the students. Time designated for field trips does NOT include travel time. Because of the outlying location of some of the supervised practice experiences, public transportation is not always available. Each student is expected to have access to an automobile or other type of reliable transportation. Neither the University nor any of its affiliated clinical facilities assumes responsibility for safe travel or cost to and from any supervised practice experience or field trip.

## **Dress Code during Field Experiences**

Students are expected to maintain a professional appearance in **ALL** facilities. Hair must be worn in a neat simple style, clean, and appropriate for professional activity. Fingernails must be clean and well groomed. Appropriate dress codes vary for individual facilities. It is the student's responsibility to avail him/herself of appropriate dress code information prior to entering a facility. Casual attire (baseball caps, t-shirts, blue jeans, halter tops, short, lingerie-looking tops, mini skirts, bare midriffs, etc.) is not considered to be appropriate dress for any clinical facility. **NO BELLY BUTTONS, BREASTS, BUTTOCKS, OR SHOULDERS** should be visible at any time. All clothing should be neat, clean, & pressed. The faculty member maintains the right to make binding decisions regarding students' participation in outside experiences based on adherence to applicable dress codes. It is the student's responsibility to arrange to make up any missed experience to which he/she was denied access due to personal appearance. **No gum chewing is allowed** in the facilities or during times students are participating in professional activities.

## **Student Dietetic Association**

The Student Dietetic Association (SDA) is a club that consists of dietetics students who meet together every other week. The meetings last no longer than an hour. The dues are \$12.00 per semester and go toward paying expenses, such as: purchase of film, development of pictures of events, refreshments for the meetings, supplies for the bulletin board, etc. The club has several objectives that are listed below.

The club provides the students with an opportunity to meet others in their major and exchange information about courses, teachers, class notes, etc. This is not only true for nutrition classes but classes across campus, such as chemistry and anatomy and physiology. Many lasting friendships are made this way.

In addition, the club engages in fund-raisers to make money for trips to professional meetings. Each October the ADA meets in a major city and if it is close enough, many of the students attend the meeting and exhibition. In the past several years, the club has ventured to Dallas, San Antonio, Atlanta, St. Louis, and Philadelphia. If students are active in the club's fund-raisers, the club will help with the expenses. Fund raisers have consisted of bake sales, car washes, cookbook sales (we have printed our own cookbook), T-shirt sales, etc.

the past, SDA has collected food, prepared Thanksgiving Day baskets, and delivered them to needy families. The club has also adopted needy families at Christmas and provided them with food and presents.

Students can list membership in the club on their resumes. This helps prospective employers see that they were active in their profession as a student. Dr. Elaine Molaison is the faculty advisor for the SDA.

## **Scholarships**

Students are encouraged to apply for scholarships available through the Department of Nutrition and Food Systems and the ADA Foundation (ADAF). In order to apply for any Department of Nutrition and Food Systems scholarship, an application must be filed in the Department of Nutrition and Food Systems office by the designated date. Notices are posted in the building and announcements made in classes concerning the scholarship deadline. Application forms for the ADAF scholarships may be obtained from Dr. Molaison or the ADA website ([www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)).

## **Application for Degree**

A student is expected to file an application for degree one (1) semester before degree requirements are completed. Notices are posted throughout the building and announcements are made in classes concerning the application for degree deadlines. Students request degree applications on the registrar's website at <http://www.usm.edu/registrar/degree%20application/index.html>. The student completes the application. A degree form is printed and stapled to the application. The student checks the diploma information and signs and dates the degree form. Signatures are needed from the faculty adviser and the Nutrition and Food Systems Chair. The student receives a copy of the signed degree form. The center office forwards the signed degree form to the dean's office.

## **Steps to Becoming a Registered Dietitian**

Before a person who has completed the DPD can practice as a registered dietitian, she/he must complete a supervised practice experience. This step is necessary to be eligible to sit for the national Registration Examination for Dietitians.

Dietetic Internships programs consist of a minimum of 1200 hours of supervised practice and are typically a year in length. Many of the programs require the student to take graduate courses along with the internship experience; a few have a full master's degree as part of the program, thus extending program length to two years.

Registered dietitians (RDs) are food and nutrition experts who have met the following criteria to earn the RD credential:

- Complete a minimum of a bachelor's degree at a US regionally accredited university or college and course work approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) of the American Dietetic Association
- Complete a CADE-accredited supervised practice program at a healthcare facility, community agency, or a foodservice corporation, or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies.
- Pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)
- Complete continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration
- Maintain licensure in the state where the RD is employed

*Licensing of dietitians and nutritionists protects the public health by establishing minimum educational and experience criteria for those individuals who hold themselves out to be experts in food and nutrition. The state has an obligation to protect the health and safety of the public and licensing of dietitians and nutritionists is consistent with this obligation. Not all states require licensure; however, it is imperative to find out if licensure is required PRIOR to beginning work as a Registered Dietitian*

### **Declaration of Intent or Verification of Completion of the Didactic Program in Dietetics**

In order to apply to a supervised practice program, students must include a Declaration of Intent form or Verification Statement in the application packet. A Declaration of Intent form indicates the anticipated date of graduation and the courses that a student will be completing prior to the start of a dietetic internship. The signatures of the program director and the student assure the supervised practice program that the student will meet the academic course work requirements by a specific date. To request a Declaration of Intent, the student must provide the DPD director with a SMART sheet from the current semester indicating the courses in which she/he is presently enrolled and list any courses that will be taken during the next semester.

Upon completion of the DPD and university graduation requirements for a Bachelor of Science degree, students request a DPD Verification of Completion form from the DPD director. The director's signature on this form verifies that the individual has successfully completed the didactic requirements. In addition to the request for the verification form, students should provide the DPD director with their preferred mailing address so the verification forms can be mailed to them. A minimum of five (5) Verification Statements will be sent to the student that should be retained for future use by the student.

### **Southern Miss Dietetic Internship**

The Dietetic Internship at The University of Southern Mississippi is a post baccalaureate dietetic program offering 1200 hours of intensive training in food service management and clinical and community nutrition. After successfully completing the dietetic internship, a student is qualified to begin entry-level practice as a dietitian, and is eligible to take the examination to become a registered dietitian (RD).

Enrollment is limited to sixteen (16) interns per year. Admission preference is given to Southern Miss DPD and enrolled graduate students and to employees of affiliated clinical facilities, provided the applicant meets all published requirements of the program. Eight (8) Southern Miss internship positions may be filled by the Preselect Option to Computer Matching. These positions are open to students enrolled at Southern Miss in the master's degree program in Nutrition and Food Systems. Remaining internship positions are filled through computer matching. For more information regarding the USM Dietetic Internship, go to the web site, <http://www.usm.edu/nfs>

The following **Recency of Education Policy** is a Southern Miss policy statement for those dietetic internship applicants with a signed Verification Statement that is dated more than 5 years from the start date of the dietetic internship. The courses taken to satisfy the requirements of this policy must be completed at a U.S. accredited college or university through an approved/accredited DPD program.

1. If the signed Verification Statement is dated within the last 5 years, then no extra coursework is required.
2. If the signed Verification Statement is dated within 5-9 years from the starting date of the internship program, then the applicant must have completed with a grade of C or better 9 credit hours of additional coursework within three years of applying to the dietetic internship. The following courses are highly recommended:
  - a. A capstone Medical Nutrition Therapy or Diet Therapy course
  - b. A capstone Foodservice Management course
  - c. An advanced level nutrition course (the exact course to be chosen/approved by the dietetic internship director and/or NFS faculty members)
3. If the signed Verification Statement is dated 10 years or longer from the starting date of the internship program, then the applicant must have completed with a grade of C or

better 15 credit hours of coursework within three years of applying to the dietetic internship. The following courses are highly recommended:

- a. A capstone Medical Nutrition Therapy or Diet Therapy course
- b. A capstone Foodservice Management course
- c. An advanced level nutrition course (the exact course to be chosen/approved by the dietetic internship director and/or NFS faculty members)
- d. A general Biochemistry course or Metabolism course
- e. An Anatomy and Physiology course or Human Physiology course

An official transcript that verifies that courses were taken within the appropriate time frame and that grades are at least "C" or better must accompany the application packet for the dietetic internship.

### **Opportunity and Procedure for Filing Complaints with the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education**

The Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) will review complaints that relate to a program's compliance with the accreditation standards. CADE is interested in the sustained quality and continued improvement of dietetics education programs but does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admission, appointment, promotion or dismissal of faculty, staff, or students.

A copy of the accreditation standards and CADE's policy and procedure for submission of complaints may be obtained by contacting staff at the American Dietetic Association, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995 or by calling (312) 899-5400.

### **Code of Ethics of the American Dietetics Association**

Commitment to upholding the ADA's Code of Ethics is an important concept in Southern Miss's dietetics program and is discussed in various classes. This code, "Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics," challenges all members to uphold ethical principles. This code is found in the appendix and is located on the Web at <http://www.eatright.org/ada/files/COE.pdf>.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. Where do dietitians work?**

Registered Dietitians (RD) are employed in a wide variety of settings, including hospitals, public health departments, nursing homes/retirement centers, food service establishments, private practice, colleges and universities, contract food service companies, industry, professional sports teams, commercial food service operations, and military service.

#### **2. What types of careers are available to individuals with a degree in Nutrition and Dietetics?**

There are many career options available to a student with a B.S. degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. Most positions require the RD credential and some may require additional education.

Some examples of careers that may be open to individuals with a bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Dietetics include:

- dietetic technician in a hospital food and nutrition services department
- dietary manager for a long-term care facility
- child nutrition program director or school foodservice manager
- nutrition educator with the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC),
- cooperative extension home economist

- sales representative for food products or foodservice equipment

Some examples of employment opportunities that require individuals to hold the RD credential include:

- clinical dietitian
- chief clinical dietitian
- renal dietitian
- public health nutritionist
- nutrition support dietitian
- consultant dietitian

**3. How important are grades in this curriculum, particularly with respect to being accepted into a dietetic internship?**

The importance of good grades must not be minimized. A **minimum** overall grade point average or dietetics grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 – 3.0 and a **minimum** GPA of 2.5 in science courses is essential for application to many of the dietetic internships. Higher overall GPAs and science GPAs make students more competitive in applying for internships. Many programs prefer grades higher than “C” in dietetics-related courses and grades no lower than “C” in science courses. Most internships will disqualify your application if you do not meet minimum GPA requirements.

**4. Are there some suggestions, besides grades, to improve my chances of being accepted into a dietetic internship?**

Yes, although there are no guarantees of receiving an appointment into a dietetic internship, there are several areas that you can work on throughout your undergraduate years to be more competitive for appointment.

The number of appointments to supervised practice programs is limited and the programs are competitive nationally. Nearly 60% of all applicants receive a match to a dietetic internship; however, in some years, as many as 50 percent do not receive a match. Dr. Molaison and the other faculty members will guide you through the process. It is important to remember that the professionals at each supervised practice site make the appointment decisions. Students who understand the competitive nature of this experience and who shape their undergraduate course work and experiences to enhance their application are generally rewarded for their efforts.

Internship selection committees favorably view work experience, especially in positions that show a growth in responsibility over time and those having a management component. Hospital food and nutrition services work such as that of a diet technician, diet clerk, or diet aid is highly valued. Food service work is also an important component of the program; therefore, work experience in areas such as college food service or long-term care facilities is valuable.

**5. What are other suggestions to improve my chances of being selected for a supervised practice program?**

- Be an active member of the SDA. Be willing to hold an office and assume responsibility for tasks. Carry out your responsibilities with enthusiasm and efficiency. Supervised practice program directors and employers value demonstrated leadership in applicants.
- Become a student member in ADA
- Participate in extracurricular activities. Southern Miss offers numerous opportunities for students to learn and develop leadership skills.

- Apply to more than one supervised practice program. The greater the number of internships to which you apply, the greater the chances of your being matched to an internship.
- Be willing to relocate out of state.
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**6. Many programs ask for letters of recommendation. Whom should I ask to write these letters?**

Each supervised practice program to which you apply usually requires three letters of recommendation. Some application procedures will allow you to select all three references while others will require that one be your adviser, clinical nutrition professor, food management professor, DPD director, or employment supervisor. You should decide as early as possible who you want to recommend you so that you can meet with them regularly and discuss your career plans. Be prepared to provide your references with some detailed information about yourself. Remember, a person who knows you well will write a better letter than someone who knows you only slightly.

Your performance in and outside of the classroom is the basis for faculty members' letters of recommendation. Faculty members are asked to rate many characteristics that they have observed in their contacts with you. These include but are not limited to punctuality; attitude; cooperation; leadership skills, including delegating duties when an officer; attention to detail; acceptance of criticism in a professional and mature manner; taking responsibility for one's own performance and behaviors; initiative; reaction to stress; adaptability; motivation; and organizational and time management skills.

**7. What are some behaviors that are found to be most favorable by many faculty members and are likely to be reflected in the letters of recommendation?**

- Develop a professional vocabulary. The courses in the curriculum are designed to teach specific knowledge and skills. Information in the NFS courses is sequenced to build the development of concepts and maturity in understanding of the subject matter. It is important that you build upon information from earlier courses when taking more advanced courses. Emphasize learning in such a way as to build the foundation for the knowledge and skills you will need as a professional.
- Demonstrate an active interest in the subject matter. This can be shown by coming to class prepared; that is, having read the assignment and having written work completed. Also, demonstrate interest by asking questions or relating relevant information to the material.
- Develop a professional work ethic. All work to be graded must be written using a word processor unless specified by the professor that handwritten work is acceptable. Multiple pages must be stapled together securely prior to coming to class.
- Be punctual. Arrive before the beginning of class and leave after class has been dismissed. Interrupting class by your late arrival is disruptive and disrespectful to the students and the professor. Additionally, professors will realize that you have difficulty with setting priorities, time management, handling multiple tasks, and consideration for others.
- Be respectful. Indicate respect for your professor and fellow students by not talking during lectures or classroom presentations. Remember to turn off your cell phone or beeper while in class. It is rude to carry on side conversations, including asking another student for clarification. You cannot hear what the professor is saying, nor can those around you.

- Exhibit courtesy. Always thank professors and fellow students when they have assisted you in a way separate from the usual. Small acts of courtesy denote that you have learned the etiquette of a professional as well as the academic knowledge and skills.
- Remember - a smile and a positive attitude will take you a long way. Most people in professional situations would rather hear you laugh than whine. No one is interested in hearing excuses.
- **Study, Study!!** Every class will require out-of-class study time each week. It is important that the study time be distributed throughout the semester and not clustered around test dates. Cramming for an exam may result in short-term, but not long-term learning.

**8. Is there a printed resource that can help prepare me for application to supervised practice programs?**

The *Applicant Guide to Supervised Practice Experience* is a valuable tool that describes many of the supervised practice programs in detail. The *Guide* provides information about many of the characteristics of the program sites such as number of applicants, number of applicants selected, and GPAs of selected applicants. Dr. Molaison has this resource available in her office.

**9. What is involved in the Internship application process?**

Students are responsible for applying to the dietetic internship programs. The basic steps in this process are

- Review the *Applicant Guide to Supervised Practice Experience* and DI/AP4 Web sites.
- Write (e-mail is acceptable) the internship or AP4 program directors for current application material or other information at least six (6) months prior to Appointment Date. Remember that this is your first introduction to the Program Director so do all you can to make a favorable first impression!
- Discuss application materials with the DPD director.
- If required, apply to take Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and make application to graduate school.
- Obtain the Declaration of Intent form or Verification Statement from the DPD director. This standardized form is to be completed by the applicant and DPD director and submitted with DI/AP4 application materials.
- Request references from adviser/faculty/work supervisor at least three weeks in advance of due dates for your completed application. Most programs prefer the letters to be included in the application packet, but a few require that they be sent directly to the program, so read the directions carefully. Provide your reference with the recommendation form (if required by DI), completed reference questionnaire (from NFS 465), and resume. Be sure to fill out and sign the top part of the recommendation form indicating your right to review or your waiver of the right to see the completed recommendation form. Ask the reference person to seal the reference in a business envelope, write the name of the program on the front, sign their name across the sealed flap, and return it to you.
- Request transcripts from all colleges/universities you have attended. You will need original transcripts for each DI/AP4 to which you apply.
- Complete each application according to directions given by the dietetic internship/AP4 director. Questions about completing applications should be referred to the DI/AP4 director and not the DPD director or ADA staff. The application packet usually contains the following items:
  - Letter of application from you or responses to specific questions

- Competed application form. Most programs use a standard application form; a disk copy of the application form is available for purchase from ADA. Some programs (for example, Southern Miss) also have additional pages that are to be completed and attached to the standard application form.
- Official transcript(s) from all universities and colleges attended
- An official Declaration of Intent form or Verification form
- Three or more recommendation letters
- Application fee
- Provide telephone number(s) with applications where you can be reached on Appointment Date.
- Mail all application materials by receipted mail for proof of mailing date and delivery. Enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard if you want to be notified of receipt of application.
- Submit mark/sense card with prioritized list of Internship/AP4s and matching fee to D&D Digital. The mark/sense card and fee should be sent by certified mail (return receipt requested). Applicant should check with D&D if certified mail receipt is not returned within three weeks.
- DI priorities should be selected carefully; no changes will be accepted by D&D Digital Systems once you submit your mark/sense card.

#### 10. **What is the Computer Matching Process?**

ADA has contracted with D&D Digital to facilitate the computer matching process. ([www.dnndigital.com](http://www.dnndigital.com)). The student/applicant obtains a computer matching booklet from the DPD director and completes it by indicating the sites to which she/he applied, in order of preference, and encloses it with the required fee. Simultaneously, supervised practice programs send a form to D&D Digital listing in order of preference, the applicants they selected for participation in their program. Computer matching does not change the applicant's nor the program's selection order. Applicants cannot be matched to a program to which they did not apply.

Before the matching begins, the applicant's priority list is "cleaned." That is, if a program to which an applicant applied does not rank an applicant, the program is removed from the applicant's list. If an applicant does not rank a program, the applicant is removed from the program's list. The matching occurs using the applicant's prioritized list of programs to which he/she applied, and the programs' prioritized list of applicants until all possible matches are complete. Students can receive only one match. In some years, up to 50 percent of students applying did not match with an internship. Applicants are provided their personal matching results from D&D Digital Systems via posting on the D & D Digital Systems Internet site. The process is explained in the "Instructions to Applicants" booklet provided by D&D Digital that is available from Dr. Molaison. Additional questions about computer matching are addressed on ADA's web site at <http://www.eatright.org>

#### 11. **What do I do if I don't match and receive an appointment to a Supervised Practice Program?**

Each year, some very qualified students do not receive appointments to supervised practice programs. Students must realize the selection process is competitive and is based on the total pool of applicants for each program. Unsuccessful candidates should re-evaluate their credentials, the application letter, indications of work experience, and commitment to the profession. Your adviser and Dr. Molaison may provide valuable

insight and make suggestions for ways to highlight the individual's strengths and to improve areas that need strengthening.

There are several options open to students who are not accepted by a supervised practice program. D & D Digital provides a list of unmatched applicants who have agreed to have their name released to each program following the matching. Programs may contact unmatched applicants or return to their applicant pool to fill positions AFTER the appointment date has passed. Also, the DPD director receives a listing of all the practice programs that did not fill their selection quota. The director may assist students in making applications to these programs.

Students may decide to re-apply for supervised practice programs that begin in January of the following year (September application deadline) or to re-apply to sites that begin in the middle of the following year (February deadline). In this instance, it is imperative that the student work on his/her qualifications to enhance the likelihood of being selected. Some activities that are usually viewed favorably by selection committees include relevant work experience and graduate or additional coursework in NFS or related areas. Do not give up. Persistent qualified applicants nearly always find a placement and are able to achieve their goal of becoming a registered dietitian.

### Hints on How to Succeed in College Classes

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### Budgeting Your Time

A general rule of thumb for college classes is that you should expect to study about 2 to 3 hours per week outside class for each unit of credit. Based on this rule of thumb, a student taking 15 credit hours should expect to spend 30 to 45 hours each week studying outside of class. Combined with time in class, this works out to a total of 45 to 60 hours spent on academic work - not much more than the time required of a typical job, and you get to choose your own hours. Of course, if you are working while you attend school, you will need to budget your time carefully. As a rough guideline, your studying time might be divided as follows.

If Your Course Is:	Time For Reading The Assigned Text (Per Week)	Time For Homework Assignments (Per Week)	Time For Review And Test Preparation (Average Per Week)	Total Study Time (Per Week)
3 credits	1 to 2 hours	3 to 5 hours	2 hours	6 to 9 hours
4 credits	2 to 3 hours	3 to 6 hours	3 hours	8 to 12 hours
5 credits	2 to 4 hours	4 to 7 hours	4 hours	10 to 15 hours

If you find that you are spending fewer hours than these guidelines suggest, you can probably improve your grade by studying more. If you are spending more hours than these guidelines suggest, you may be studying inefficiently; in that case, you should talk to your instructor about how

to study more effectively.

## **GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR STUDYING**

- Don't miss class. Listening to lectures and participating in discussions is much more effective than reading someone else's notes. Active participation will help you retain what you are learning.
- Budget your time effectively. An hour or two each day is more effective, and far less painful, than studying all night before homework is due or before exams.
- If a concept gives you trouble, do additional reading or problem solving beyond what has been assigned. And if you still have trouble, ask for help: you surely can find friends, colleagues, or teachers who will be glad to help you learn.
- Working together with friends can be valuable in helping you to solve difficult problems. However, be sure that you learn with your friends and do not become dependent on them.
- When studying your text: Don't highlight - underline! Using a pen or pencil to underline material requires greater care than highlighting, and therefore helps to keep you alert as you study.

## **Preparing for Exams**

- Rework problems and other assignments; try additional problems to be sure you understand the concepts. Study your performance on assignments, quizzes, or exams from earlier in the semester.
- Study your notes from lectures and discussions. Pay attention to what your instructor expects you to know for an exam.
- Reread the relevant sections in the textbook, paying special attention to notes you have made in the margins.
- Study individually before joining a study group with friends. Study groups are effective only if every individual comes prepared to contribute.
- Don't stay up too late before an exam. Don't eat a big meal within an hour of the exam (thinking is more difficult when blood is being diverted to the digestive system).
- Try to relax before and during the exam. If you have studied effectively, you are capable of doing well. Staying relaxed will help you think clearly.

## **Presenting Homework and Writing Assignments**

All work that you turn-in should be of collegiate quality: neat and easy to read, well-organized, and demonstrating mastery of the subject matter. Future employers and teachers will expect this quality of work. Moreover, although submitting homework of collegiate quality requires "extra" effort, it serves two important purposes directly related to learning.

1. The effort you expend in clearly explaining your work solidifies your learning. In particular, research has shown that writing and speaking trigger different areas of your brain. By writing something down - even when you think you already understand it - your learning is

reinforced by involving other areas of your brain.

2. By making your work clear and self-contained (that is, making it a document that you can read without referring to the questions in the text), it will be a much more useful study guide when you review for a quiz or exam.

The following guidelines will help ensure that your assignments meet the standards of collegiate quality.

- Always use proper grammar, proper sentence and paragraph structure, and proper spelling.
- All answers and other writing should be fully self-contained. A good test is to imagine that a friend is reading your work, and asking yourself whether the friend would understand exactly what you are trying to say. It is also helpful to read your work out loud to yourself, making sure that it sounds clear and coherent.
- In problems that require calculation:
  - Be sure to show your work clearly. By doing so, both you and your instructor can follow the process you used to obtain an answer.
  - Word problems should have word answers. That is, after you have completed any necessary calculations, any problem stated in words should be answered with one or more complete sentences that describe the point of the problem and the meaning of your solution.
  - Express your word answers in a way that would be meaningful to most people. For example, most people would find it more meaningful if you express a result of 720 hours as 1 month. Similarly, if a precise calculation yields an answer of 9,745,600 years, it may be more meaningful in words as "nearly 10 million years."
    - Pay attention to details that will make your assignments look good. For example:
      - Use standard-sized white paper with clean edges (e.g., do not tear paper out of notebooks because it will have ragged edges).
      - Staple all pages together; don't use paper clips or folded corners because they tend to get caught with other students' papers.
      - Use a ruler to make straight lines in sketches or graphs.
      - Include illustrations whenever they help to explain your answer.
  - Ideally, make your work look professional by using a word processor for text and equations and by creating graphs or illustrations with a spreadsheet or other software.
  - If you study with friends, be sure that you turn in your own work stated in your own words - it is important that you avoid any possible appearance of academic dishonesty.
  - If a grading rubric is provided, USE IT while preparing your assignment. Faculty members cannot give you credit for an item that is missing. However, just including a part of the assignment does not assure maximum points for the assignment. Work must be of very

high quality to get maximum credit.



## What is Proper College Classroom Etiquette?

Author: **Flora Brown**

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Exercising personal freedom is one of the most appealing things about college. With the casual dress and attitudes that prevail in American colleges, however, it's not surprising that some college students don't know where to draw the line on individual expression and social interchange. While the connection between your classroom behavior and course grade may be not be clear, there are some behaviors that are clearly rude, unacceptable and in poor taste.

1. Addressing the teacher in a casual manner. "Hey Dude, what's up?" is okay for your friends, but not appropriate for your teacher. This even applies for teachers who dress and behave casually. Avoid personal comments or questions about their manner of dress or family. The teacher may be friendly, but is not your buddy. A teacher who is overly friendly is crossing the line himself or herself, and is luring you into another area of behavior that can be devastating for both of you.
2. Habitually arriving to class late. While some teachers are lax about tardiness, it is disruptive to the lecture or other activities when all heads turn to watch your entrance. If your schedule just won't allow you to get to this class on time, drop it and take one that is convenient for you.
3. Habitually leaving class early. Don't schedule your job, other appointments nor activities during your class hour. Last semester a few of my students would come to class to take the quiz that I give at the beginning of class, then leave. Even though these students left quietly, they routinely missed the rest of the class which included the lecture and discussion of the concepts. This lack of clarity revealed itself in their test results.
4. Dominating classroom discussion, even to the point of interrupting the teacher with some point you want to make. Some students jump into classroom discussions so enthusiastically that they trample through the teacher's lecture interjecting comments, many of them less than insightful. This type of student not only upsets the teacher, but infuriates the other students.
5. Answering your cellular phone in class. Turn off your cellular phone and pager before entering class or else you may be asked to leave the class. This is definitely not cute nor impressive. If you are the principal player in multimillion dollar deals, why break your concentration by taking a college class right now?
6. Eating and drinking in class. Although some teachers of early morning classes may tolerate your cup of coffee, other teachers are not so generous. The possibility of spilling, not to mention the disruption it causes, has lead many colleges to post "No Eating" signs in classrooms, library and labs. And the reality that classroom carpets are cleaned infrequently may mean that you and your fellow classmates must endure the spots, stains and odors all semester.

7. Chatting during class discussion or while fellow students are giving oral reports. Your fellow students appreciate a quiet learning environment and resent students who continually disrupt the decorum. The one time in twelve years that I have evicted students from my class was when two young men were snickering at students as they gave oral reports. This behavior can land you in front of the Dean of Students and may lead to suspension.

8. Angrily confronting the teacher. Spend time understanding the course syllabus and requirements from the start to cut down on later misunderstanding. Some teachers are lax about attendance, for example, while other teachers have zero tolerance for tardiness even to the point of locking the classroom door. Some teachers accept late and makeup assignments, while others don't. If you meet with the teacher as problems arise you will avert problems.

Attending college classes should be stimulating, informative and sometimes even fun, but only when the environment is conducive to learning. While teachers have varying levels of tolerance for various classroom behaviors, you can make your own college experience enjoyable by showing courtesy and respect toward your classmates and teachers alike.

**Finally, a tip on faculty evaluations...**

Faculty evaluations are not a time to air personal grievances. You should be evaluating the faculty member's ability to meet classroom objectives, and give suggestions on improving the class for the future. More plainly, "Put less stress on evaluating what we have done and more on stimulating what we might do." (Eble, 1985)