

The University of Southern Mississippi's

Dietetic Internship

Policies and Procedures



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Access to Personal Files

POLICY

All interns have the right to access personal records or files.

PROCEDURE

An intern can request a copy of their advising folder from their advisor. All requests must be made in writing. Interns have the right to inspect and review their educational records within 45 days from the time of the request. In addition, copies of transcripts can be obtained from the registrar's office for a fee. However, transcripts may be held, if the intern is not in good standing with the university.

Access to Student Support Services and Tutoring

POLICY

Interns have access to intern support services and tutoring as part of being enrolled at The University of Southern Mississippi.

PROCEDURE

A list of all intern support services and tutoring services available on campus will be provided to the interns in the handbook. In addition, faculty advisors have access to this information, which can be provided to the intern during advising.

Admission Criteria & Due Process

POLICY

All potential students who meet eligibility requirements will be ranked for possible admission to the DI Program.

PROCEDURE

- An intern must be admitted to the Master of Science in Nutrition and Food Systems Graduate Program at Southern Miss (Either regular or conditional admission) to be considered as a candidate for the Southern Miss Dietetic Internship (DI). Admission to the graduate program may be granted pending receipt of final undergraduate transcript.
 - Second round match applicants may be considered prior to admission for graduate school based on an application review by the DI Director. Applicants may be offered second round match placement under the condition that they will apply and be admitted through the graduate school application process.

- An intern must have a verification statement signed by the DPD Program Director. If they have not yet completed their DPD, they must be able to submit a Declaration of Intent to Complete Degree signed by the DPD Program Director, and submit the Verification Statement following completion of the program. The DI Director will collect all DPD verification statements during the summer prior to the interns' first graduate course.

- Minimum academic records for admission to the program are:
 - GPA of 2.75 on the last 65 undergraduate hours (graduate school requirement), GPA of 3.00 on didactic coursework (dietetic internship requirement), and you must have a minimum GPA of 2.70 on required science prerequisites, with no grade lower than "C" in ANY of those courses.
 - The following courses are included but not limited to:
 - General Chemistry (at least 1 semester)
 - Anatomy & Physiology (at least 1 semester)
 - Organic Chemistry (1 semester)
 - Microbiology (1 semester)
 - Biochemistry (1 semester)
 - Must apply for preselect or computer matching.
 - Completed dietetic internship application, with ranked preference for supervised practice placement.
 - Have a personal interview on selected dates with Southern Miss Internship selection committee.

After admission to graduate school and application to the dietetic internship, applicants will be ranked for placement in the dietetic internship. Up to eight (8) of the sixteen (16) Southern Miss Dietetic Internship positions may be filled by the Preselect Option rather than Computer Matching. Applicants who do not participate in or qualify for preselect MUST participate in computer matching. Applicants should request instructions to prioritize their DI preferences. Applicants should request this material from any AND-approved Didactic Program in Dietetics or from D & D Digital Systems.

Advising, Evaluation, & Counseling

POLICY

The program director for the Dietetic Internship is responsible for coordinating advising efforts, evaluating student records, and counseling students throughout their academic careers. Faculty advisors are required to advise students every semester.

PROCEDURE

The program director has the responsibility and authority to coordinate advising, evaluation, and counseling. Faculty advisors work with the program director on issues related to advising, and the program director is responsible for making decisions related to evaluation of transcripts and counseling students through the internship.

Interns with minimal chances of success in the program, or those that repeatedly fail to meet expectations in their supervised practice or graduate coursework are counseled into career paths that are appropriate to their ability based on the interns' career interests.

Supervised Practice Affiliation Agreements

POLICY

Affiliation Agreements will be maintained with all placement sites offering supervised

PROCEDURE

The process for initiating a contract to indicate an affiliation agreement between The University of Southern Mississippi and a placement site offering supervised practice will be initiated by the dietetic internship program. Once signature authority and contact information is received, the following process will be followed:

- The Administrative Assistant will draft the contract and obtain the signature of the supervised practice site. Following this, school signatures will be obtained.
- The signed contract will be sent to the dean's office*, followed by legal counsel, and the provost. (Three weeks will be given for the process before checking on the status of the contract).
- Once the signed contract is returned to the school's office, a fully executed copy will be sent to the supervised placement site for their records.

In the event the placement site does not choose to use the standard contract, a copy of the new contract will be sent to legal counsel before the process begins to assure that appropriate edits are made to the contract prior to obtaining signatures. In addition, the practice site will be given the opportunity to review the revised contract prior to obtaining signatures.

All affiliation agreements will be reviewed for currency during December and June of each year to allow for adequate time for contract renewal.

Assessment of Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

POLICY

The program director is responsible for assessing program goals and student learning outcomes.

PROCEDURE

Program faculty, advisory board, and faculty preceptors are included in the development of all program goals and benchmarks used to assess achievement of the goals. In addition, faculty are included in choosing intern assignments that are used to assess intern learning outcomes. After the sources of data are identified, the program director will send out surveys, collect evaluations from interns, and obtain grading rubrics or other data from faculty, interns, and/or preceptors on an annual basis. Electronic copies of the data collection instruments will be stored for no less than 5 years and no more than 10 years. The program director will analyze the data and provide a copy of the results to the faculty members, preceptors, and/or advisory board members. The results will be used to make changes to the program and to the curriculum (see Curriculum Review policy).

Assessment of Prior Learning

POLICY

No credit will be given toward the dietetic internship program requirements for experiential learning or previous graduate credit.

Attendance in the Dietetic Internship

POLICY

Interns are required to attend classes and supervised practice experiences related to the dietetic internship.

PROCEDURE

NFS 567L- Field Trips and Seminars

Interns are expected to attend all scheduled field trips or seminars. An intern who has an excused absence from a scheduled field trip or seminar should give as much prior notice as possible to the Internship Director, and make arrangements with the Internship Director to make up missed time and assure mastery of didactic and other concepts covered in the field trip or seminar. In addition to making up any assignments for the field trip or seminar, the intern must submit a paper on the topic discussed in class within 1 week of the absence. The paper should be at least five double spaced pages (typed, 12-point font), with appropriate citations. A list of five references and a title page must also be submitted. The format for the paper is APA style. The intern will lose 10% of the credit available for each day that the assignment is late. If the paper is unacceptable, the intern will be requested to resubmit the paper. Unsatisfactory performance of class responsibilities is considered as unsatisfactory performance of Dietetic Internship requirements. If an intern is unable to attend a Journal Club virtual class meeting, he/she will be required to complete an annotated bibliography utilizing all of the research articles that were presented during that class meeting.

Interns are expected to adhere to the supervised practice schedule. Both for rotations in the hospital facility and for other rotations, it is each intern's responsibility to contact their assigned facility preceptor prior to reporting for the rotation to find out when and where to report. Interns will receive a list containing contact information for preceptors. Absences should rarely occur and should occur only when necessary. Interns must document a minimum of 32 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters (with the exception of those weeks that contain a holiday). However, interns cannot work during times when at least one primary preceptor is not available at the facility. If an intern works without an appropriate preceptor, the supervised practice hours will be voided. The total number of hours of learning experiences is required by the Dietetic Internship at The University of Southern Mississippi in order to document to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) that interns have successfully met supervised practice requirements. Interns with repeated absences are subject to faculty review and may be counseled to terminate participation in the program.

An intern who must be absent from a scheduled supervised practice rotation due to an unforeseen personal illness, accidental injury, death of a member of the immediate family, or personal emergency, must:

- Call the Dietetic Internship Director with as much advance notice as possible and inform the director of the reason for the absence and the proposed date of return to the facility. If unable to reach the director, leave a message and send an email to explain the situation.
- Call the Facility Preceptor with as much advance notice as possible and inform the preceptor of the reason for the absence and the proposed date of return to the facility. If unable to reach the facility preceptor, leave a message and send an email to explain the situation.
- Work with the facility preceptor to determine the date(s)/times when the missed day(s) will be made up and fill out the required paperwork and submit the paperwork to the director with the proposed make up dates.

Make up the missed supervised practice hours, have the preceptor sign, and return the original sheet to the dietetic internship director.

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return the original sheet to the dietetic internship director.

If an intern knows in advance he/she will be absent from the facility during regular hours, permission must be obtained. The intern must:

- Submit a request to the director at least **4 weeks in advance**, preferably by the first day of the semester involved.
- The DI director will consider the request in light of the individual intern's performance in the program. Signed approval from the director must be obtained before a request can be made of the facility.
- If approval is given, the intern will request the time off from the facility working directly with the primary preceptor to make up the missed time in blocks of **no less than 2 hours**.
- Work with the facility preceptor to determine the date(s)/times when the missed day(s) will be made up and fill out the required paperwork and submit the paperwork to the director with the proposed make up dates.
- Make up the missed supervised practice hours, have the preceptor sign, and return the original sheet to the dietetic internship director.

The following is a summary of disciplinary procedures for attendance/tardiness problems

Problem	Action Taken
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Excused Absence	Supervised practice hours made up on a Friday or other day not normally in the facility. Date/time to be determined by facility preceptor. Dietetic Internship Director identified in writing of absence and provided with written verification of additional supervised practice. Days cannot be made up during university or facility holidays or during weekends.
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Unexcused Absences or tardiness	1st offense: Oral warning with written plan of action
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	2nd offense: Written warning in intern's permanent file and committee* meeting with intern
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	3rd offense: Termination from the DI program
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ii. Professional Meetings

Attendance at professional meetings, including the Annual Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food & Nutrition Conference & Exhibits in the fall, the Mississippi Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food & Nutrition Conference & Exhibits in the spring, and a MS-AND Board meeting (if available) is required. An intern who, because of severe illness or injury, death in the family, or some other unforeseen event, is unable to attend all or part of a required professional meeting must meet with the Internship Director to decide upon a commensurate assignment, and complete that assignment in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of the Internship Director.

Communication

POLICY

The program director is responsible for communicating issues related to the dietetic internship program in dietetics to the faculty, interns, preceptors, advisory board, and others directly related to the program.

PROCEDURE

The program director will share information with faculty, interns, preceptors, and others directly related to the program utilizing a variety of methods. The most common method of communication will be e-mail. Interns can be contacted via e-mail on topics such as scholarships, program policies, class requirements, etc. In addition to e-mail, faculty and preceptors will be updated during faculty meetings or on site visits where issues related to the program will be communicated.

Curriculum Review

POLICY

The program director is responsible for assuring the curriculum is reviewed systematically on a periodic basis.

PROCEDURE

The program director will assure that all program requirements are being met through the curriculum on an annual basis with faculty members directly related to the dietetic internship and at least every two years with preceptors in the various rotations. In addition to reviewing the current accreditation requirements for the curriculum, the program director will share student comments and student learning outcomes with the faculty and preceptors. The faculty and preceptors will be asked to incorporate all required components of the curriculum into DI courses. Based on data from the student learning outcomes, student evaluations, or program goal assessment, revisions are made to the curriculum. After proposed implementation of the changes to the curriculum, the program director makes certain that the revisions to the curriculum are implemented. If changes are not made, the program director will work directly with the faculty member(s) and preceptor(s) to either make the revision or update the current practice. Documentation of changes in activities will be maintained by the program director.

Accommodations for Disabilities

POLICY

Reasonable accommodations will be made for interns with disabilities.

PROCEDURE

If an intern believes that they have a disability which is covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and makes them eligible to receive classroom or housing accommodations, they should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information regarding the registration process. Disabilities covered by the ADA may include but are not limited to ADHD, learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic health disorders, temporary illnesses or injuries and pregnancies. Students should contact ODA if they are not certain whether their documented medical condition qualifies for ODA services. Students are only required to disclose their disability to the Office for Disability Accommodations. All information submitted to ODA by the student is held with strict confidentiality.

Address:

The University of Southern Mississippi
Office for Disability Accommodations
118 College Drive # 8586
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Voice Telephone: 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3302 Fax: 601.266.6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the *Mississippi Relay Service* at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or email ODA at oda@usm.edu.

Disciplinary & Termination Procedures

POLICY

The dietetic internship reserves the right to discipline and/or terminate any student enrolled in the program.

PROCEDURE

Intern Evaluations are used to provide an evaluation of the dietetic intern's professional behavior and will be used as part of the Pass/Fail grade calculated for NFS 567L.

All interns will be evaluated within the first 3 weeks of the internship by the facility preceptor(s). In addition, all interns will be evaluated by the preceptors at the completion of EACH rotation. For all rotations, a copy of the evaluation will be submitted to the internship director or appropriate faculty member.

The evaluations serve to:

- Provide written documentation of the intern's professional performance
- Provide feedback to an intern concerning strengths and weaknesses to facilitate improved performance

In addition to the written evaluation, interns will be evaluated on preparation and willingness to perform duties while in the facilities. The intern is NOT to make determinations if the work being requested of him/her is appropriate. If a question arises regarding the appropriateness of an activity/assignment, the intern must contact the internship director. The internship director will make a decision on the appropriateness of the assignment and will be responsible for contacting the preceptor if an activity does not meet the requirements of the internship or provide beneficial experience to the intern. In addition, the time at the facility is meant for activities ONLY related to that specific rotation. The intern is not allowed to work on any other work during supervised practice hours. Some examples of comments that will not be tolerated in the internship include:

- I can't do that...
- I'm working on something else...
- Can I do it later?
- That's not part of my objectives...
- But I already did one like that...
- I can't make it on that day/time... (unless the intern, the preceptor, and the dietetic internship director have arranged for missed time in the internship)
- Any other comment that denotes an intern's unwillingness to perform specific duties at the supervised practice facility. This list is **not** all inclusive

Interns scoring a "Poor" on any aspect of the Evaluations or is reported to be unwilling to perform duties at the facilities (see above) following discipline protocol will be followed.

1 st offense	Written warning placed in intern' permanent file. Plan of action written by intern and approved by facility preceptor and Dietetic Internship Director filed.
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2 nd offense (same behavior)	Committee* meeting with the facility preceptor(s) and Dietetic Internship director to file plan of action (e.g. additional supervised practice, additional coursework, continued remediation of assignments.) One-half of professional conduct points forfeited in NFS 567L.
3 rd offense	Termination from the DI

The Admission/Retention committee will consist of the following: NFS department faculty member and/or chair, Dietetic Internship Director, Facility Preceptor (from another facility), and an intern representative. The dietetic intern with the identified problem also will be in attendance. The committee's function is to provide unbiased input for problem resolution. If the intern is not in agreement with the committee's decision(s), the intern has the right to provide a written appeal to the Director of the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition.

Any intern failing to maintain academic standards of the internship and/or graduate school requirements will be subject to probationary status for one semester following action by the Admission/Retention Committee. Any intern failing to achieve the required GPA during the probationary semester may be dismissed from the Internship following action by the Admission/Retention Committee.

An intern may be placed on disciplinary probation for one semester by a majority decision of the Admission/Retention Committee if the intern has failed to comply with accepted standards of professional behavior of either the assigned facility or the University. At the completion of the semester of disciplinary probation, the Admission/Retention Committee will reconsider the intern's behavior during the probationary period, and will recommend one of the following actions:

- A. reinstatement of regular Internship status
- B. continuation of probationary status for an additional semester, or
- C. dismissal from the Internship

The intern will be informed in writing of probationary status at least one (1) week prior to the beginning of the probationary period. An intern may be dismissed from the Internship upon a majority decision by the Admission/Retention Committee if the intern has repeatedly failed to comply with accepted standards of professional behavior after being placed on disciplinary probation for one semester, or if the intern commits an act that is considered so grievous as to warrant immediate dismissal.

In addition, any of the following actions are also considered as just cause for immediate dismissal:

- Unauthorized removal, destruction, or theft of any property of the program, USM, clinical/management facilities, employees, or clients.
- 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 (see Drug Screening & Criminal Background Check)
- Unauthorized use, possession, or distribution of firearms, explosives, fireworks or knives on the grounds of USM or its clinical/management facilities.
- Willful submission of false information or alteration of any records or reports.
- Dishonesty (cheating, forgery, plagiarism, etc.).

- Disclosure of confidential information or discussion of any client information with unauthorized personnel.
- Negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty.
- Willful disobedience or insubordination.
- Abusing a faculty member, staff member, or fellow student (including abusive language).
- Willful violation of laboratory safety or other laboratory policies
- Criminal Background Check which reveals a felony

See also Grievance Policy & Procedure

Dress Code During Field Experiences

POLICY

Interns are expected to maintain a professional appearance in **ALL** facilities.

PROCEDURE

Hair must be worn in a neat simple style, clean, and appropriate for professional activity. In foodservice facilities, hair will need to be contained, utilizing a variety of methods (as determined by the facility): hairnet, ball cap, bonnet, or ponytail holder. Fingernails must be clean and well groomed, and extend no more than 1/4" beyond the tip of the finger. Appropriate dress codes vary for individual facilities. It is the intern'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, miniskirts, 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. Closed toe shoes should be worn at all times in all facilities and during any supervised practice experience or field trip. All clothing should be neat, clean, & pressed. The faculty member or facility preceptor maintains the right to make binding decisions regarding interns' participation in outside experiences based on adherence to applicable dress codes. It is the intern'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 interns are participating in professional activities.

Interns are expected to abide by dress codes in effect in each facility in which they work. Uniforms and/or lab coats should be clean and pressed at **ALL** times when on duty in **ANY** clinical facility. For the Internship Open House, meetings, field trips, university sponsored events, and any class meetings away from campus, interns are expected to wear professional dress. Unless otherwise specified, dress professionally for all situations related to the dietetic internship.

Name tags will be worn by Dietetic Interns in all supervised practice experiences. In primary hospital supervised practice facilities, name tags are provided by the hospital, and are the property of the hospital. They must be returned when the intern leaves the facility at the end of the program. Southern Miss name tags will be worn during supervised practice experiences away from the intern's primary practice site. Southern Miss name tags are ordered during the summer semester, and replacement name tags may be ordered through the Internship Director at any time during the program.

Drug Screening And Criminal Background Check

POLICY

Interns may undergo a drug screening and criminal background check prior to placement in supervised practice facilities and may be removed from the program based on the results of the screening and/or check.

PROCEDURE

Interns must agree to any additional terms required by the Facility. Some facilities (including hospitals, nursing homes, and facilities whose employees deal with small children) are required by law to do a criminal background check on each of their employees. Because of state law, in hospitals, interns must meet the same requirements as employees. Some interns may be required to bear the expense of fingerprinting which will be used in a criminal background check. Some school districts also categorize interns as non-compensated employees, and thus require fingerprinting as well. **If a background check reveals a felony, the intern will be dismissed from the program immediately, and no effort will be made to place the intern in a different facility.**

Several of the facilities also require drug testing, including urinalysis, as a part of orientation to the facility, and may also reserve the right to require random drug testing. **Any intern failing to pass any drug testing will be dismissed from the program immediately.** In addition, if an intern is suspected of drinking prior to arriving at a facility or at the facility, the facility and/or the university reserves the right to test the student for alcohol or drug use. If substance abuse is found, the intern will be **immediately and permanently removed from the program.**

Since all facilities are different in what they require, you will be required to get a background check prior to summer orientation and complete a drug test prior to fall orientation. These items will be kept on file by the DI Director in the event a facility needs access to it. Interns should also keep these available for facilities who require you to show these documents but do not provide the testing themselves.

Equal Opportunity

POLICY

The admission and retention policies of the Internship comply with the University's philosophy and intent regarding protection of civil rights of interns.

PROCEDURE

The admission and retention policies of the Internship comply with the University's philosophy and intent regarding protection of civil rights of interns. The University of Southern Mississippi's Non Discrimination Policy Statement can be accessed at <https://www.usm.edu/affirmative-action-equal-employment/aaeeo-policies.php>

It states:

The University of Southern Mississippi offers to all persons equal access to educational, programmatic and employment opportunities without regard to age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic information, religion, race, color, national origin, and/or veteran status pursuant to applicable state and federal law.

Inquiries concerning discrimination should be directed to the following:

The Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity

EEO Coordinator - Christian Cameron

McLemore Hall (MCL) 310 | 118 College Drive #5111 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406

Phone: 601.266.6618 | Fax: 601.266.4541 | TTY/TDD: 1.800.582.2233

Formal Assessment of Intern Learning & Reports of Performance/Progress

POLICY

All interns are assessed formally for professionalism and competence throughout the internship with periodic reports of progress from preceptors and instructors.

PROCEDURE

Professionalism Performance: The Professional Evaluations are used to provide an evaluation of the dietetic intern's professional behavior. Professional Conduct/Performance Evaluations will be conducted at the completions of all rotations. The professional conduct/clinical performance scores will be used as part of the Pass/Fail grade calculated for NFS 567L.

Initial Evaluation: All interns will be evaluated within the first 3 weeks of the internship in the fall semester by the facility preceptor(s). These evaluations will be discussed during an in-person or virtual visit with Internship faculty (DI Director or other faculty member). The purpose of the initial evaluation is to review professional conduct in the facility, identify possible concerns of either interns or preceptors, and to develop strategies to assist interns in integrating into the facility and managing program requirements. This evaluation occurs for all students during the fall semester. If an issue is identified, the intern and the dietetic internship director/assistant director will develop an action plan for the student to remedy the situation. If the behavior continues and is reported by the preceptor, steps to initiate withdrawal of the intern from the program will be initiated.

Routine evaluations: All interns receive routine evaluations by the preceptors at the completion of EACH rotation. The evaluation is discussed with the intern and an electronic copy of the evaluation is submitted to the internship director or faculty member. Following completion of the clinical rotation (both General Clinical and Advanced Clinical) and the Management rotation, a meeting may be scheduled with the intern, facility preceptor, and Dietetic Internship Director/or faculty member to discuss the evaluations as needed. Facility preceptors may request a conference and/or in person visit to discuss intern performance at any time during the intern's placement in the facility. See below for a complete description of performance evaluation with disciplinary procedures.

The evaluations serve to:

- Provide written documentation of the intern's professional performance
- Provide feedback to an intern concerning strengths and weaknesses to facilitate improved performance

The intern performs a self-evaluation at the beginning and completion of each major rotation to serve as a guide for what qualities and attributes need to be improved during the rotation and achievement of personal and educational goals. Self-evaluations are reviewed by program faculty (DI director/faculty member) as part of the P/F grade in NFS 567L. Interns may be required to revise and resubmit incomplete self-evaluation documents.

Completion of Competencies/Objectives

Unless indicated as a course requirement for any graduate course in the Master's in Nutrition and Food Systems, performance on competencies/objectives/learning experiences will be evaluated on a below, meets, or exceeds expectations by the supervising dietitian/facility preceptor or the Southern Miss faculty member upon completion of each experience.

Objectives and supervised practice activities requiring evaluation will be scored using the following criteria:

Criteria	Below Expectations (Scored 1-3 on CBEs)	Meets Expectations (Scored 4-6 on CBEs)	Exceeds Expectations (Scored 7-9 on CBEs)
Quality of Work	Does not meet most basic standards	Meets all basic standards	Exceeds basic standards
Accuracy	Errors common and/or serious	Errors infrequent/rare and intern corrects errors promptly	Work is accurate with minimal to no errors
Supervision Required	Constant/close checking and correcting required	Minimal amount of checking and correcting required	Little to no checking or correcting required

“Meets Expectations” score requires at least 2 of the 3 criteria scored a 4 or greater. In situations where unsatisfactory scores are given, verbal and/or written feedback will be offered to the intern to encourage performance improvement. Interns must revise and resubmit any assignments or parts of an assignment that receive a score less than 4 (below expectations). Interns must reattempt any competency that receives an initial score less than four (below expectations). Verification of successful completion of objectives will be noted by the supervising dietitian/facility preceptor’s signature and date on the evaluation form. The Southern Miss faculty members will also confirm completion of the objectives at the completion of each semester. Interns are rated independently on some objectives receiving a rating from both the facility preceptor and the Southern Miss faculty member.

Following sign-off by supervising dietitian/facility preceptor, competencies/objectives that are a part of course requirements will be evaluated for a grade by the DI Director/Southern Miss faculty member. Interns will also be evaluated periodically during the program using Competency Based Evaluations (CBEs) within project rubrics in graduate coursework. These evaluation tools are constructed in such a manner that activities or skills that are considered to be of greater significance carry greater weight than those of lesser significance.

For ALL **graded assignments**, a grade of 75% is REQUIRED. If an intern does not achieve a 75% on the first attempt, re-submission of the assignment is MANDATORY! A student who has to repeat an assignment more than 2 times will be subject to the discipline policy of the program. In addition, an average of the 2 grades will be used as a final grade for the assignment for the course. Low grades can have an impact on the intern’s overall course grade; thereby lowering the GPA. An overall GPA of 3.0 on all internship-related courses is required to remain in the dietetic internship and receive a verification statement. Poor grade performance may also affect graduate school admission status (conditional admission) or probation, and a 3.0 graduate GPA is required for completion of the MS degree.

Grievance Procedures

POLICY

The program director is responsible for receiving and handling complaints from interns, faculty, preceptors, and others directly involved with the program. A copy of the grievance procedures is given to each intern enrolled in the Dietetic Internship.

PROCEDURE

The first step in resolution of a legitimate intern grievance is to attempt to resolve the issue with the faculty and/or facility preceptor with whom the grievance originated. If agreement is not reached, the intern may present an appeal to the Southern Miss DI Director. In the event that the grievance is still not resolved to the intern's satisfaction, the line of authority is the Director of the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition, the Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences, the Southern Miss Provost, and the President of the University. If the intern fears retaliation from the faculty member or program director, he/she may directly report complaints to the Director of the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition. The DI director maintains communications related to grievances and works with the appropriate individual(s) to resolve the issue (e.g. Director of the School, Academic Deans, etc.). Refer to the current Southern Miss Undergraduate Bulletin for the Grade Review Policy for graduate classes. Students should only submit complaints directly to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) after all other options with the program and institution have been exhausted.

If a preceptor has a grievance against an intern, the first step in resolution of the problem is to address the concern with the intern. If an agreement is not reached, the preceptor can contact the dietetic internship director. In addition, the preceptor can use the formal evaluation process (see above) as a method for reporting problems and/or issues with the intern. If the preceptor has a grievance with the dietetic internship director, any faculty affiliated with the program, or the program, the preceptor can address the issues with the dietetic internship director directly. If the preceptor feels the problem cannot be addressed with the dietetic internship director, the line of authority is the Director of the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition, the Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences, the Southern Miss Provost, and the President of the University. Preceptors should only submit complaints directly to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) after all other options with the program and institution have been exhausted.

The program director will maintain a record of intern complaints for a period of seven years, including the resolution of complaints.

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) will review complaints that relate to a program's compliance with the accreditation standards. This should only occur after the intern has exhausted all other options available to them.

Contact information for ACEND:

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190
Chicago, IL 60606-6995
800.877.1600, Ext 5400, www.eatrightpro.org/acend

The intern is protected from retaliation as a result of filing a complaint related to the dietetic internship program.

Injury or Illness in Supervised Practice Facilities

POLICY

Interns are responsible for injury or illness that occurs while in supervised practice facilities.

PROCEDURE

Neither the University nor any of its affiliated clinical facilities assumes responsibility for personal health of interns. In the case of an injury or illness in a supervised practice facility, the intern should expect facility staff to assist in getting them to medical attention, but should not expect that neither the supervised practice facility nor the University is to assume any financial responsibility for treatment of the injury or illness.

Insurance

POLICY

Interns must show evidence of liability insurance and are expected to be covered by health and automobile insurance.

PROCEDURE

Professional Liability: Evidence of professional currently effective malpractice liability insurance must be provided for each intern through Southern Miss at a cost of \$20 per year. Each intern who is registered for NFS 567L will be assessed a \$10 malpractice liability insurance fee at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters during which he/she is registered for the Practicum. The fee will be noted on the intern's statement from the Southern Miss Business Office. No fee will be assessed during the summer semester, when interns are not assigned to supervised practice rotations.

Personal Health and Personal Health Insurance: Each intern assumes responsibility for his/her own personal health and personal health insurance. Interns may be assigned to facilities requiring proof of health insurance for student placement. Interns must provide proof of health insurance as required by assigned facilities.

Neither the University nor any of its affiliated clinical facilities assumes responsibility for personal health of interns. Interns are liable for their own personal wellbeing and safety in all assigned rotations and travel to and from assigned facilities. In the case of an injury or illness in a supervised practice facility, the intern should expect facility staff to assist in getting them to medical attention, but should not expect that neither the supervised practice facility nor the University is to assume any financial responsibility for treatment of the injury or illness.

Although the risk of exposure to blood-borne pathogens is not high during supervised practice, it is the judgment of the staff of the DI that there is sufficient risk to require interns to have the series of vaccinations for Hepatitis B. It is suggested that each intern begin the series at the beginning of the summer semester to provide as much protection as possible. Evidence of all three vaccinations must be provided to the DI Director.

Each intern is required to have a TB skin test prior to beginning supervised practice in the fall, and should provide evidence of same to the DI Director. The DI Director will provide copies of all immunization records to the appropriate facility coordinators.

Automobile Liability Insurance: Each intern assumes responsibility for his/her own automobile liability insurance. Neither the University nor any of its affiliated clinical facilities assume responsibility for injury or liability of interns while riding in or operating a motor vehicle. If an intern rides to a remote clinical practice site with a facility preceptor in that person's private vehicle, or in a vehicle provided by the facility, he/she may be expected to produce documentation assuring that the intern is covered by active automobile insurance covering him/her in a vehicle driven by a preceptor and owned by that person, or by the facility.

Leave of Absence

POLICY

Interns are entitled to a temporary leave of absence from the dietetic internship.

PROCEDURE

Interns are allowed to take a leave of absence for reasons determined appropriate by the Dietetic Internship Director and the Department Chair. If an intern must request a leave of absence, he/she must do the following:

1. Request the leave of absence IN WRITING from the facility preceptor(s) AND the DI Director at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed leave. **If a leave of absence needs to extend beyond 4 weeks, the intern may be asked to leave the internship and re-apply the following year.**
2. Work with the DI Director and preceptor(s) to determine the following:
 - i. When the time will be made up (exact dates and times)
 - ii. When the missed activities will be due (exact dates)
 - iii. A completed list of all activities and deadlines, as determined by the DI Director and preceptor(s)
3. Develop a DETAILED written action plan that addresses all of the items in #2 and obtain signatures from 1) The DI Director, 2) All preceptors impacted by the leave of absence, and 3) The Director of the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition.

If the student cannot complete the required competencies/objectives within the semester or requests a leave of absence, the intern must complete ALL required assignments within one semester of finishing the internship. If the assignments cannot be completed by the August following the scheduled completion of the internship, he/she will not receive a verification statement.

A student may be required to enroll in additional course hours for the additional semester(s) to complete the required assignments for the dietetic internship.

Maintaining Program Accreditation

POLICY

The program director for the Dietetic Internship is responsible for maintaining program accreditation through the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

PROCEDURE

The program director has the responsibility and authority to maintain program accreditation, gathering information from faculty, preceptors, students, or others directly related to the program. The program director will use the information gathered to prepare annual reports, self-study documents, and any other required reports. It is the program director's responsibility to report any significant changes in the program to all appropriate individuals/groups.

Policies & Procedures

POLICY

The DI Program Director has the responsibility of developing, maintaining, updating and dissemination of program policies and procedures.

PROCEDURE

The program director will review the program policies and procedures on a bi-yearly basis. Revisions and/or additions will be made to the policies and procedures, as appropriate. The policies and procedures will be distributed to the SKN faculty who will approve the policies and procedures. A hard copy of the policies and procedures can be found in the program director's office. In addition, all program policies and procedures pertinent to interns enrolled in the program will be distributed through the intern handbook during orientation. A digital copy of the intern handbook will be given to every intern enrolled in the program, and the intern will be required to sign a verification stating they have received a copy of the handbook. Interns in the program will receive an updated copy of the handbook if changes to the policies and procedures have a significant impact on their progress in the DI curriculum.

Pre-Select Positions for the Internship

POLICY

The internship will allow up to 8 of the positions into the dietetic internship to be pre-selected prior to the computer matching deadline.

PROCEDURE

Students that received/are receiving a DPD verification statement from The University of Southern Mississippi are eligible to apply for pre-select. Pre-select applications are taken prior to the computer matching deadline and the applicants are notified of placement prior to February 1 of each year.

Preceptor Training

POLICY

Preceptor training will be conducted no less than every two years. Training should be attended by all preceptors affiliated with the dietetic internship at The University of Southern Mississippi.

PROCEDURE

The following information will be sent to preceptors during the summer semester. The preceptor training will be conducted prior to interns entering facilities/supervised practice locations.

All dietetic internships are required to provide preceptor training.

This training is designed for all preceptors, and should be attended by any individual wishing to learn more about being an effective preceptor and the dietetic internship at Southern Miss.

Components of the Preceptor Training:

1. Preceptor Training from CDR (Strongly recommended, but not required)
 - a. 8 CPEUs (FREE for preceptors of dietetics students)
 - b. Learning modules, self-assessments, and case-based activities
 - c. Covers the following topics:
 - i. Preparing for Your Role as Preceptor
 - ii. Planning for Student Learning
 - iii. Facilitating Student Learning
 - iv. Assessing Student Learning
 - v. Communicating Effectively
 - vi. Managing Your Time
 - vii. Keeping Current
 - d. If interested, please contact: Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); E-mail: assessandlearn@eatright.org; Phone: 1-800/877-1600 ext. 4816
2. Attend a virtual presentation with the DI program director.
 - a. Every preceptor will be sent a copy of the following:
 - i. PowerPoint presentation
 - ii. Policies & procedures for the dietetic internship
 - iii. Dietetic Internship Handbook
 - iv. Updated rotation supervised practice requirements
 - b. Training is expected to last no longer than 1 hour

Professional Attitudes and Values

POLICY

Interns are expected to maintain a professional attitudes and values in the classroom as well as during any field experiences.

PROCEDURE

Southern Miss Dietetic Interns are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect favorably on themselves, their assigned clinical facility, the Southern Miss Dietetic Internship, and The University of Southern Mississippi. Each intern is further expected to abide by The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetic's Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics.

All interns enrolled in the Dietetic Internship 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 interns
- Keeping appointments
- Assuming leadership roles, as appropriate to the situation

The Professional Evaluations are used to provide an evaluation of the dietetic intern's professional behavior. Professional Conduct Evaluations will be conducted in all rotations. The professional conduct/clinical performance scores will be used as part of the Pass/Fail grade calculated for NFS 567L.

All interns will be evaluated within the first 3 weeks of the internship by the facility preceptor(s). In addition, all interns will be evaluated by the preceptors at the completion of EACH rotation. In all rotations, a copy of the evaluation will be submitted to the internship director or appropriate faculty member.

The evaluations serve to:

- Provide written documentation of the intern's professional performance
- Provide feedback to an intern concerning strengths and weaknesses to facilitate improved performance

The intern performs a self-evaluation at the beginning and completion of each rotation to serve as a guide for what qualities and attributes need to be improved during the rotation and achievement of personal and educational goals.

Program Completion Requirements

POLICY

All interns admitted into the internship must meet outlined program completion requirements and earn a Verification Statement within 32 months (150% of timeframe for completion).

PROCEDURE

Course Requirements

The Southern Miss Dietetic Internship is comprised of five semesters, beginning with the fall semester after the intern is admitted into the internship. Required courses for the three semesters are listed below:

MS Required Curriculum – Course Titles (Credit Hours)			
Year One	Summer	Fall	Spring
	No Class	NFS 664 (1) NFS 713 (3) KIN 680 (3)	NFS 662 (3) KIN 681 (3)
Year Two	Summer	Fall	Spring
	NFS 630 (4) NFS 640 (4)	NFS 650 (3) NFS 567L Supervised Practice (3)	NFS 660 (3) NFS 567L Supervised Practice (3) NFS 691 (3) Comprehensive Exams

NFS 567L - Practicum in Dietetics is graded on a Pass-Fail basis, with successful completion of the course dependent upon successful completion of all supervised practice objectives for that semester. NFS 567L credits cannot be applied toward a graduate degree. Interns will not receive facility assignments for supervised practice and will not have the Master Rotation Schedule until August just prior to the beginning of fall semester (year 2) to know which rotation(s) they will complete.

All interns are required to participate in a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised practice while enrolled in the dietetic internship. Interns are expected to adhere to the supervised practice schedule. Both for rotations in the hospital facility and for other rotations, it is each intern's responsibility to contact their assigned facility preceptor prior to reporting for the rotation to find out when and where to report. Interns will receive a list containing contact information for preceptors. Absences should rarely occur and should occur only when necessary. Interns must document a minimum of 32 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters of year 2 (with the exception of those weeks that contain a holiday). However, interns cannot work during times when at least one primary preceptor is not available at the facility. If an intern works without an appropriate preceptor, the supervised practice hours will be voided. The total number of hours of learning experiences is required by the Dietetic Internship at The University of Southern Mississippi in order to document to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) that interns have successfully met supervised practice requirements. Interns with repeated absences are subject to faculty review and may be counseled to terminate participation in the program.

Interns must meet all program requirements to receive a verification statement. Should an intern not meet all requirements within a 21-month timeframe, a plan will be made by the Director for the intern to finish within 150% of the timeframe (32 months).

Program Retention and Remediation Procedures

POLICY

Remediation will be provided in the dietetic internship by using various teaching methods and techniques, modifying teaching strategies and presentations, giving clear, corrective feedback and positive reinforcement. All program faculty and preceptors utilize retention strategies to maintain a strong program.

PROCEDURE

All interns are required to make a B (3.0 or better) in both NFS 630 and NFS 640 (not a cumulative average) during the dietetic internship. Interns failing to maintain a B (3.0) or better in these classes will be dismissed from the internship and will not begin supervised practice in the fall semester.

For ALL **graded assignments**, a grade of 75% is REQUIRED. If an intern does not achieve a 75% on the first attempt, re-submission of the assignment is MANDATORY! A student who has to repeat an assignment more than 2 times will be subject to the discipline policy of the program. In addition, an average of the 2 grades will be used as a final grade for the assignment for the course. Low grades can have an impact on the intern's overall course grade; thereby lowering the GPA. An overall GPA of 3.0 on all internship-related courses is required to remain in the dietetic internship and receive a verification statement. Poor grade performance may also affect graduate school admission status (conditional admission) or probation, and a 3.0 graduate GPA is required for completion of the MS degree.

Unless indicated as a course requirement for NFS 650 or NFS 660, performance on competencies/objectives/learning experiences will be evaluated on a satisfactory/non-satisfactory basis by the supervising dietitian/facility preceptor or the Southern Miss faculty member upon completion of each experience.

Criteria	Below Expectations (Scored 1-3 on CBEs)	Meets Expectations (Scored 4-6 on CBEs)	Exceeds Expectations (Scored 7-9 on CBEs)
Quality of Work	Does not meet most basic standards	Meets all basic standards	Exceeds basic standards
Accuracy	Errors common and/or serious	Errors infrequent/rare and intern corrects errors promptly	Work is accurate with minimal to no errors
Supervision Required	Constant/close checking and correcting required	Minimal amount of checking and correcting required	Little to no checking or correcting required

“Meets Expectations” score requires at least 2 of the 3 criteria scored a 4 or greater. In situations where unsatisfactory scores are given, verbal and/or written feedback will be offered to the intern to encourage performance improvement. Interns must revise and resubmit any assignments or parts of an assignment that receive a score less than 4 (below expectations). Interns must

reattempt any competency that receives an initial score less than four (below expectations). Verification of successful completion of objectives will be noted by the supervising dietitian/facility preceptor's signature and date on the evaluation form. The Southern Miss faculty members will also confirm completion of the objectives at the completion of each semester. Interns are rated independently on some objectives receiving a rating from both the facility preceptor and the Southern Miss faculty member.

If a knowledge deficit is identified while at a site, the program director will provide the intern with remedial work in the form of case studies, problem sets, self- study aids. Occasionally an intern may be required to spend additional time at a site in order to achieve competency. The decision to lengthen a rotation is determined in collaboration with the preceptor, the internship director and the intern.

Protection of Privacy of Intern Information

POLICY

Intern information will be protected.

PROCEDURE

The University of Southern Mississippi and the DI program, consistent with the regulations of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as amended in 1974, insure interns the right to inspect and review their educational records within 45 days from the time of the request. In addition, the law prohibits the release of personally identifiable information without the intern's permission. A complete description of FERPA can be found at:

<https://www.usm.edu/registrar/internalportal/ferpa-compliance.php>

Recency of Education

POLICY

If an applicant to the dietetic internship has a signed verification statement more than 5 years old, he/she will be required to remediate coursework.

PROCEDURE

The courses taken to satisfy the requirements of this policy must be completed at a U.S. accredited college or university through an 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 courseAn 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.

Recruitment & Retention

POLICY

The program director is responsible for coordinating recruitment efforts for the DI program.

PROCEDURE

All program faculty, preceptors, and interns enrolled in the dietetic internship recruit students and utilize retention strategies to maintain a strong program without discriminating on the grounds of age, gender, race, color, religion or national origin.

Use of Interns as Replacement Employees

POLICY

The use of interns to replace employees is strictly prohibited by the dietetic internship, with the exception of supervised practice activities that consist of a culminating experience, where the intern must demonstrate supervisory or independent skills (e.g. clinical staff experience, theme meal, continuous quality improvement project, etc.).

PROCEDURE

If the intern feels that he/she is being used as a replacement employee, he/she must contact the dietetic internship director. It is the responsibility of the dietetic internship director to contact the supervised practice facility to investigate the allegation. If it is found that the intern is being used as a replacement employee, the facility preceptor will be notified, and it will be requested that the activity cease immediately.

Scheduling and Program Calendar

POLICY

Interns will observe the holidays and vacations listed in the academic calendar, with the exception of fall break and Mardi Gras.

PROCEDURE

A copy of the academic calendar can be found at <http://www.usm.edu/registrar/calendars>. Each intern is required to participate in 32 hours/week of supervised practice experience, with the program culminating in an intern-planned special interest experience at the end of the spring semester. Interns will be scheduled for supervised practice experiences Monday through Thursday of each week, leaving Fridays available for seminar classes or other concurrent graduate classes. Each intern will follow the Master Rotation Schedule to complete each of the required rotations for the internship. Interns are scheduled in supervised practice facilities during Southern Miss fall and spring semesters and may expect to have breaks from supervised practice during regular Southern Miss semester breaks, but not necessarily all university holidays. Interns are not scheduled in facilities during the Christmas holiday. However, any days that are not considered as holidays MUST be made up by the dietetic intern.

The following rotations are required (see Supervised Practice Master Rotation Schedule Legend):

- 1 week – Diabetes Camp
- 1 week - Orientation
- 1 week - Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics & Mississippi Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Annual Meeting
- 4 weeks - Management
- 2 weeks – Management Retail
- 6 weeks – General Clinical
- 7 weeks – Advanced Clinical (includes 1-2 weeks of pediatrics)
- 2 weeks – Long Term Care
- 2 weeks – Child Nutrition Programs
- 2 weeks – Renal
- 1 week – Food Bank
- 1 week – Women, Infants, and Children (as available)
- 2 weeks – Special Interest (intern-planned rotation)
- 8 hours—Professional Development

Each intern will meet with his/her Facility Coordinator at the beginning of each semester to establish the facility preceptors with whom the intern will work during the remainder of the semester, and to arrange periodically for networking contacts with preceptors outside the primary hospital facility.

Selection of Supervised Practice Facilities & Assessment of Preceptors

POLICY

The dietetic internship has affiliations with appropriate facilities and/or preceptors.

PROCEDURE

All supervised practice facilities must meet federal, state, and accreditation guidelines, where appropriate. In addition, all interns will evaluate the supervised practice facility for appropriateness in providing activities and experiences. If the intern ranks the facility as poor in any area, the dietetic internship director will investigate the issues and try to resolve the issues with the supervised practice facility. If the issues cannot be resolved, the dietetic internship director has the right to withdraw interns from a facility. In addition, a facility may request that interns be removed from a facility (with a 30-day notification, as per the contract). Contracts are maintained for each supervised practice facility. Every other year, the program director will document and evaluate the educational background and experience of the preceptors working directly with the interns to assure that the experiences of the preceptor are appropriate to meet the objectives and competencies outlined by the dietetic internship.

Social Media

POLICY

Social media should be used responsibly and ethically by dietetic interns.

PROCEDURE

Social media may be defined and described as sharing information through social networks and the internet for rapid knowledge exchange and dissemination among many people. Dietetic interns have a professional obligation to understand the nature, benefits, and consequences of participating in social networking of all types. Interns must be aware that social networking venues are shared by their patients and colleagues. Unintended consequences of social media use can breach a patient's privacy and damage the intern's professional and personal future. Employers and educational institutions may also monitor social networking sites and make judgments (positive or negative) about professional suitability.

Principles for Social Networking

1. Dietetic interns must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information. Interns must know their legal and ethical responsibilities, as well as their own organization's policies, regarding their responsibility to protect patient privacy, whether online or offline. Merely removing someone's name (or face, in the instance of images) from a communication does not necessarily protect that person's identity.
2. Dietetic interns who interact with preceptors on social media must observe professional boundaries. Any interaction within this setting should represent the intern, university, preceptor and facility positively. No content, language or pictures should be used in a negative manner as this could result in disciplinary procedures for the intern.
3. Dietetic interns should evaluate all their postings with the understanding that a patient/client, colleague, educational institution, placement site or future employer could potentially view those postings. Online content and behavior has the potential to either enhance or undermine not only the individual's career, but also the dietetics profession.
4. Dietetic interns should take advantage of privacy settings available on many social networking sites in their personal online activities and seek to separate their online personal and professional sites and information. Use of privacy settings and separation of personal and professional information online does not guarantee, however, that information will not be repeated in less protected forums.

Intern Records

POLICY

The program director for the Dietetic Internship is responsible for maintaining intern records.

PROCEDURE

The program director assumes the responsibility for maintaining all intern records. The program director will file intern information in a locked filing cabinet or password protected folder (such as Microsoft Teams or OneDrive). The folder will be kept completely intact for a period of two years. At the end of two years, all information, with the exception of 2 original copies of the intern's DI verification statement, 1 original copy of the intern's DPD verification statement, and transcripts will be shredded. Copies of these documents will be kept on file indefinitely. The program director reserves the right to maintain selected student assignments and submissions for accreditation purposes.

Transportation to Field Experiences

POLICY

The DI is neither responsible nor liable for interns' transportation to field experiences.

PROCEDURE

Transportation to and from supervised practice experiences as well as field trips and classes away from campus throughout the course of the DI program is the total responsibility of the interns. Time designated for field trips does NOT include travel time. Because of the outlying location of some of the field experiences, public transportation is not always available.

Each intern is expected to have access to an automobile or other type of reliable transportation. Each intern assumes responsibility for his/her own automobile liability insurance. Interns assume all liability for personal safety in travel to or from assigned areas. Neither the University nor any of its affiliated clinical facilities assume responsibility for injury or liability of interns while riding in or operating a motor vehicle. If an intern rides to a remote clinical practice site with a facility preceptor in that person's private vehicle, or in a vehicle provided by the facility, he/she may be expected to produce documentation assuring that the intern is covered by active automobile insurance covering him/her in a vehicle driven by a preceptor and owned by that person, or by the facility.

Transportation costs may be affected by many variables, including the proximity of the intern's housing to the clinical facilities, shared rides with other interns or with staff working in that facility, etc. Anticipated expenses will be those normally associated with maintaining and operating an automobile.

Interns will fill out several forms including the emergency contact form and student group travel release form. These forms can be found here: <https://www.usm.edu/leadership-student-involvement/advisor-resources.php>

Verification Statements

POLICY

The program director is responsible for issuing, distributing, and maintaining verification statements.

PROCEDURE

In order for an intern to successfully complete the Southern Miss Dietetic Internship and receive a Verification Statement to that effect, he/she must

- Complete all 30 hours of the graduate degree and have the degree conferred.
- Complete at least 1200 hours of supervised practice experience, documented by submitting the completed NFS 567L Practicum in Dietetics Time Log for each semester.
- Complete all course and rotation requirements with the appropriate project grades/scores and final grade. Receive a passing evaluation on each of the competencies/objectives/learning experiences in each rotation.
- Complete all rotations with appropriate behavior evaluation score.
- Attend all scheduled orientations, seminars and field trips.
- Attend all professional meetings, as required.
- Participate in activities external to facility placement (e.g. Recruiting Activities, Health Promotion and Education Project, Leadership Activity, etc.)
- Participate in and attend all days of the review session for the registration examination.
- Attend the pinning ceremony.
- Successfully complete all objectives as verified by a Facility Preceptor or Facility Coordinator, as well as the Southern Miss Clinical Instructor/faculty member or Southern Miss Internship Director.
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA in concurrent graduate classes to meet all other academic standards of the internship. If interns are conditionally admitted to the graduate program, they must adhere to all policies and procedures set forth by the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition and the College of Graduate Studies to maintain admission.

At the completion of each class, the program director will review the list of interns eligible to receive a verification statement. All interns are required to make a B (3.0 or better) in both NFS 630 and NFS 640 (not a cumulative average) during their third semester of the dietetic internship. Interns failing to maintain a B (3.0) or better in these classes will be dismissed from the internship and will not begin supervised practice in the fall semester. A grade of 75% is REQUIRED on ALL assignments. If an intern does not achieve a 75% on the first attempt, re-submission of the assignment is MANDATORY! An average of the 2 grades will be used as a final grade for the assignment. Low grades can have an impact on the intern's overall grade; thereby lowering the GPA.

Unless indicated as a course requirement for NFS 774 or NFS 780, performance on competencies/objectives/learning experiences will be evaluated on a satisfactory/non-satisfactory basis by the supervising dietitian/facility preceptor or the Southern Miss faculty member upon completion of each experience.

Criteria	Below Expectations (Scored 1-3 on CBEs)	Meets Expectations (Scored 4-6 on CBEs)	Exceeds Expectations (Scored 7-9 on CBEs)
Quality of Work	Does not meet most basic standards	Meets all basic standards	Exceeds basic standards
Accuracy	Errors common and/or serious	Errors infrequent/rare and intern corrects errors promptly	Work is accurate with minimal to no errors
Supervision Required	Constant/close checking and correcting required	Minimal amount of checking and correcting required	Little to no checking or correcting required

“Meets Expectations” score requires at least 2 of the 3 criteria scored a 4 or greater. In situations where unsatisfactory scores are given, verbal and/or written feedback will be offered to the intern to encourage performance improvement. Interns must revise and resubmit any assignments or parts of an assignment that receive a score less than 4 (below expectations). Interns must reattempt any competency that receives an initial score less than four (below expectations).

Verification of successful completion of objectives will be noted by the supervising dietitian/facility preceptor’s signature and date on the evaluation form. The Southern Miss faculty members will also confirm completion of the objectives at the completion of each semester. Interns are rated independently on some objectives receiving a rating from both the facility preceptor and the Southern Miss faculty member.

Interns may be admitted to the Southern Miss Dietetic Internship with conditional admission to graduate school. Those interns must meet all of the conditions of their graduate school admission in order to remain in the dietetic internship. If the conditions of the intern’s graduate school admission status are not met, interns must resign their position in the dietetic internship. In order to re-enter the program, they will need to participate in the application and selection process during the next year. In addition, if an intern is placed on academic probation, it is the intern’s responsibility to determine and achieve the grades needed to remove the academic probation. Any intern failing to remove the conditional admission status, failing to remove academic probation, or failing to maintain a 3.0 overall GPA during the internship (all 5 semesters) will not receive a verification statement at the completion of the internship.

The program director will provide a digital verification statement OR a minimum of 5 signed copies of the verification statement to the intern; a digital copy of the signed verification statement will be kept on file indefinitely.

In the event that a new verification statement needs to be issued, the current program director will verify that the student has completed all program requirements utilizing any or all of the following methods: review of a previous verification statement on file, review of transcripts, and verification that the student has a degree posted to his/her transcript. A new verification statement will be printed by the current program director and signed with the current date. This copy of the verification statement will be given to the internship graduates.

Verification of Student Identity in Online Learning/Online Testing

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to describe the process whereby The University of Southern Mississippi verifies the identity of students in online learning.

PROCEDURE

The current information delivery system for The University of Southern Mississippi is Canvas. Students must use their login username and password to access the Canvas system. Access to Canvas is restricted to authorized users, which is defined as an individual who has been assigned a username and password by Information Technology staff, or by any agent authorized by the Administrative Team.

The Academic Integrity Policy shown below is included in course syllabi, and student agreement is required for comprehensive examinations delivered in Canvas. Students acknowledge the policy as recipients of the USM Intern Handbook.

“Academic misconduct involves deception to improve a grade, earn course credit, complete a degree or create an unfair academic advantage for oneself or disadvantage to another in the academic community. It includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate acquisition or provision of information, conspiracy to cheat or plagiarize, lying about academic work, stealing academic materials physically or electronically, and unapproved multiple submissions of assignments.”

Additional information regarding The University of Southern Mississippi’s academic integrity policy and process can be found here: <https://www.usm.edu/advisement-center/academic-integrity.php>. Additional information regarding online learning at Southern Miss can be found here: <https://www.usm.edu/online-learning/index.php>

Withdrawal and Refund of Tuition & Fees

POLICY

An intern is permitted to drop a course without academic penalty and may be entitled to a refund of tuition and fees.

PROCEDURE

An intern is permitted to drop a course without academic penalty up to and including approved dates published in the Class Schedule Guide. An intern finding it necessary to withdraw from the university must begin the process with the dean of his/her college, who shall initiate the Withdrawal and Refund Authorization form. More information on withdrawal can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/registrar/internalportal/withdrawal-policy.php>

The schedule dates for refunds of tuition are posted in the Business Office and on the Business Office Web site at <https://www.usm.edu/business-services/withdrawals-and-tuition-credit.php>

If an intern takes a leave of absence from the program, additional courses may be required, with additional fees. (See Leave of Absence Policy)