
PRECEPTOR HANDBOOK



Oakwood University Dietetic Internship Program



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The faculty and staff of the Oakwood University Dietetic Internship Program would like to thank you for the significant contributions you make to the profession of nutrition and dietetics, and to the education of future registered dietitians. We recognize the enormous impact preceptors have on our program. Simply put, our program would not exist without the hard work and dedication of our preceptors. We are excited to partner with you as friends and colleagues as we prepare future dietetics professionals to serve mankind.

We invite you to share your thoughts about our program with us and provide feedback about our program through our Preceptor Program Evaluation Form. We encourage communication with the DI Director throughout the year.

In an effort to assist you through the preceptor process, we have created this handbook. We hope that you will find it to be a useful tool.

Thank You!

Oakwood University

Dietetic Internship Program

Program Mission, Goals, & Objectives

Program Mission:

“The Oakwood University Dietetic Internship Program trains dietetic practitioners to serve in the fields of dietetics and nutrition. It provides didactic and experiential opportunities which enable interns to develop skills, demonstrate professionalism, apply knowledge, and work effectively to improve the quality of nutrition for the people they serve. The program integrates faith and learning, preparing individuals to serve God and man.”

Program Goal 1: To prepare interns to become competent entry-level dietitians.

Program Objectives:

1. 90% of the interns enrolled in the DI program will complete all program requirements within 150% (15 months for full-time interns and 30 months for part-time interns) of the time planned for completion.
2. Over a five-year period, the pass rate for DI graduates taking the examination for the first time will be at least 80%.
3. At least 90% of student interns, employees and preceptors will confirm they were adequately prepared to perform well in the field of dietetics.
4. 80% of the DI graduates will be working in an area which allows them to practice the principles of MNT within six months of program completion.

Program Goal 2: The program will prepare competent dietetic practitioners to use their knowledge of nutrition to serve the community.

Program Objectives:

1. 90% of dietetic interns will engage in service where they can provide balanced nutrition information to the community.
2. 80% of the program graduates will confirm the adequacy of program preparation to share knowledge of nutrition and dietetics, to the community.

Preceptor Checklist for Intern Orientation at Facility

Topics to include in the orientation process for interns at your site are as follows:

- ❖ Required facility orientation (HIPPA, dress code, etc.)
- ❖ Facility mission and goals
- ❖ Facility policies and codes of conduct
- ❖ How will students obtain an appropriate ID (if necessary)?
- ❖ What space will be available for student use (office, locker, etc.)?
- ❖ Parking restrictions
- ❖ Meal policies
- ❖ Daily routine and schedule (i.e. work hours, breaks, rounds, and expectations)
- ❖ Tools - items interns should bring to rotations (i.e. lab coat, calculator, folder, etc.)

Introduction

One important key to successful precepting is moving the intern from some level of dependence to a high level of independence.

In dietetics, a preceptor is similar to a mentor. The origin of the term "mentor" dates to the time of Homer, specifically to *The Odyssey*. Homer describes his hero, Odysseus, preparing to set out on an epic voyage, but his son, Telemachus, must remain behind. Odysseus asks a trusted friend, Mentor, to guide and counsel Telemachus in his absence. From this ancient literary figure, mentor has come to mean *one who helps guide a protégé through a developmental process*, whether that process be the transition from childhood to adulthood or from intern to professional or from novice dietetics professional to expert dietetics professional. Because of the complexity of this task, mentors are considered to be teachers, counselors, friends, role models, and more. As a preceptor with the OU dietetics internship program you will fulfill many of these roles.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has affirmed the three-pronged approach to training dietetics professionals: Didactic knowledge, supervised practice, and examination. The supervised practice component is crucial in preparing interns and fostering the skills they need to be entry-level practitioners.

What Constitutes Supervised Practice?

Practice is what you (the professional) do on a daily basis. The intent is to give interns the necessary skills so that they could, if necessary, do your job. They are not expected to perform your job at the same level as you, but should be able to do the job satisfactorily – **i.e., interns should be trained at the level of what you'd expect in an entry-level competence by the end of their supervised practice experience rotations.** It helps to focus on the concept that what you do on a day-to-day basis is what you are trying to train interns to do. Special projects are acceptable and often desirable, as long as they teach the skills and experiences that would be ordinarily used by you in your work.

Preceptor Roles

Preceptors are special people. They are highly accomplished professionals, yet “résumé” expertise is not enough. They may have many years of “front-line” experience behind them, yet more than experience is required to be a successful preceptor. The qualities and responsibilities of a good preceptor include, but go beyond, those of an accomplished dietetics professional.

Good preceptors provide interns with appropriate learning experiences, honest feedback and assessment, penalty-free advice, and communicate often with the Oakwood University faculty and other preceptors to share ideas and experiences. The preceptor plays a vital role in the development of the intern. It is the job of the preceptor to provide support and collegiality while helping the intern learn the “ropes” in the complex art and science of dietetics and professionalism. In a variety of ways, the preceptor offers the intern opportunities to share and learn from an experienced colleague. Important roles of the preceptor include: acting as a model, providing feedback and guidance for expected work, and assurance about common fears and problems of being a new professional.

The essence of precepting is the individual relationship between an experienced and expert professional, and an educated, but inexperienced intern. The preceptor may incorporate a variety of strategies and activities to help the intern grow and develop in professional competence, attitudes, and behaviors.

The preceptor's goal should be to help the intern develop and enhance:

- **Competence** - mastery of the field --knowledge, skills, and application.
- **Self-Confidence** - belief in one's ability to make good decisions, to be responsible, and to be in control.
- **Self-Direction** - the assurance and ability to take charge of one's personal, professional, and career development.
- **Professionalism** - to understand and assume the responsibilities and ethics of the dietetics profession.

What Do Preceptors Teach?

Interns learn competency skills from their preceptors and mentors. Competency is the ability to carry out a specific task within parameters of control.

Summarize your own image of what your professional role is and what it should be. Practice those tasks that achieve that image. Separate the nice-to-know from the need-to-know tasks. The need-to-know tasks take priority and must be taught to interns. The nice-to-know, which can also contribute important skills, can be taught later after the intern has attained entry-level competence.

Before you begin...Teaching Tips

1. Provide a clear orientation
2. Set ground rules
3. Define expectations of interns

Teaching as a Preceptor

There are a variety of teaching models that may be utilized by preceptors. The “Dr. FIRM” model has been established as an effective teaching tool (Pichert, p. 465-479).

DR. FIRM

- ❖ **D:** demonstration, presentations and problem solving
- ❖ **R:** rehearsal of content
- ❖ **F:** feedback and correction
- ❖ **I:** independent practice
- ❖ **R:** review
- ❖ **M:** motivate to persevere

Demonstration:

- Allow interns observe early in rotation and then walk them through the steps.

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- Show them (demonstrate) the shortcuts. Explain the rationale for the steps and assumptions behind the shortcuts. Don't assume they understand the shortcuts the first time.
 - Stick to the important points and help interns develop their problem solving skills.

Rehearsal:

- Have interns role play your job (i.e., have them calculate the rate of an enteral formula).
- The only way you can evaluate them is to observe their performance.
- Explain how to dovetail two tasks. They are often unaware of the time constraints.

Feedback:

Feedback communicates your approval or disapproval and your empathy.

- Feedback should be open, corrective, and specific.
- Provide additional hints for shortcuts and thoroughness; subtleties frequently slip past interns.
- Quiz them on what patients, clients, or staff may ask.
- Emphasize thoroughness.
- Errors should be corrected and interns should repeat task as often as you deem appropriate.

Independent Practice:

Time for you to let go – but interns should feel free to ask you questions as needed.

- Place a time deadline for specific tasks and shorten the time deadlines as interns progress. Set up times when they check with you in their "independence."

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- Be creative. Make it fun for you and for the interns.

Review:

Have student demonstrate their tasks. Don't assume anything, do mention strength and weaknesses. Have student rehearse again if necessary.

- Mention strengths and weaknesses.
- You may have to demonstrate again the learned shortcuts.
- Have the interns rehearse again, if needed.

Motivate:

Tell interns how good and conscientious work makes a difference.

- Be specific, not general.
- Relate it to something they feel is important (i.e., a tube feeding was initiated because of their calculations and recommendations).

Maggie Powers' book, *Handbook of Diabetes Nutritional Management*, published by ASPEN, 1987

Helpful Hints

Clinical Nutrition

Purpose:

The purpose of the clinical rotation is for the interns to gain experience in/exposure to the various areas of nutrition care in the medical center. It is NOT expected that the interns will gain entry level competence or do staff relief during this rotation. However, they should be able to complete assessments, prepare nutrition care plans, provide education, and document care in the medical record.

Learning Outcomes:

Clinical competencies and learning outcomes can be found in the competency section of this handbook.

Clinical Supervised Practice Experience

In preparation for working with the interns, consider the following questions and be ready to discuss (and show) the answers with/to the interns.

- What are my primary responsibilities?
- What skills are most important for me to carry out my responsibilities?
- How do I “keep up” with my area of responsibility, how do I learn about new developments, methods, products, etc.?
- What are the key interactions I have outside the department?
- How do I communicate with other members of the patient care team, with the other dietitians and technicians, with foodservice managers?
- How do I prioritize my activities each day?
- What resources do I use (people, texts, media, etc.) when I need help in completing a task?
- What “tricks of the trade” do I use to help me accomplish various aspects of my job?

As opportunities arise, model various activities you perform, such as assessments, diet instructions, charting, physician interaction, etc. Then, allow the intern to perform the same activities under your supervision. As competency develops, the intern’s work load can be increased and more complex tasks assigned.

Clinical Activities

The main portion of time of an intern's time will be spent understanding and performing the duties of a clinical dietitian. In addition, the, interns could participate in some of the following enriching activities:

- Spend time with a diet tech
- Participate in daily clinical conference reports
- Visit with and observe other disciplines
- Participate in multidisciplinary teams

The interns should complete the following:

- Basic Competency checklist (form is in competency section). The intern will be responsible to complete the Basic Competency Check List – communicating with his/her preceptors regarding competencies still to be achieved. We understand some learning activities may not be available at all times.

Helpful Hints

Food Service Management

Purpose:

- To provide an opportunity for interns to explore the complexity of foodservice operations in a health care environment.

Learning Outcomes:

Management competencies and learning outcomes can be found in the competency section of this handbook. In addition, interns should be able to grasp the following:

- The scheduling of patient feeding with cafeteria and catering functions.
- The interface of clinical and foodservice needs.
- The role of each member of the management team.
- The time is short, so the expectation is for overview understanding, not in-depth performance.

Begin with an orientation to your position and responsibilities. Orientation ideas include:

- Walk them through a typical day, and some of the “critical control points” you check on at various points in the day.
- Share some of the reports you generate and explain the purpose of the reports.
- Discuss some of the personnel issues you deal with, and how you inspire good performance from your employees, and how you carry out evaluations.
- Share some of the on-going problems you deal with and some of the solutions you have implemented.
- If the intern is scheduled to work with one of your employees, please prepare the employee by reviewing the purpose of that rotation and encouraging the employee to let the intern “jump right in” after an explanation and demonstration of what to do.
- The time is too short to “do” your job, but if there is one task you could show the interns how to perform, explaining its purpose, and let them work on it for 1-2 hours, they would gain a feel for at least a piece of your role.

In preparation for working with the interns, you might want to think through the following questions and be ready to discuss (and show) the answers with/to them:

- What are my primary responsibilities?
- What skills are most important for me to carry out my responsibilities?
- How does my work contribute to the desired outcomes of the department?
- Who reports to me and to whom do I report? How do those interactions take place?
- What do I look for when hiring employees, and how do I handle the interview?
- What type of training do I give to the employees in my stewardship?
- How do I handle discipline issues with my employees?
- How do I “keep up” with my area of responsibility, how do I learn about new developments, methods, products, etc.?
- What are the key interactions I have outside of the department?
- What laws, regulations, codes, etc., are important in my work?

Evaluations

Evaluations of Interns by Preceptors

A very important part of the intern’s learning comes from thoughtful and honest evaluations. Feedback should be provided throughout the rotation with a formal evaluation at the end of

the rotation. The “overall intern performance evaluation” form is available at the Oakwood University Dietetic Internship website (<http://www.oakwood.edu/images/zfiles/allied-health/Internship-Documents/Overall%20Intern%20Performance%20Evaluation.pdf>).

Listed below are some tips for evaluation:

- Feedback should be an ongoing process during the rotation to help interns modify their skills and behavior.
- Evaluation is part of the learning process and can help build confidence.
- Final evaluations, at the end of the rotation, tell interns how to strengthen or modify their skills in the future. Corrected behavior does not need to be brought up in the final evaluation.
- The results of the evaluation at the end of the rotation should NEVER come as a complete surprise.
- Evaluations are helpful for the preceptor. They provide feedback about what you do to make the learning experience beneficial for the interns, and what could make it better.

APPENDIX

Dietetic Internship Core Competencies for the RD Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) 2017 Standards

Domain 1

1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice: Integration of scientific information and translation of research into practice. Competencies Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

CRDN 1.1 Select indicators of program quality and/or customer service and measure achievement of objectives.

CRDN 1.2 Apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature.

CRDN 1.3 Justify programs, products, services and care using appropriate evidence or data.

CRDN 1.4 Evaluate emerging research for application in nutrition and dietetics practice.

CRDN 1.5 Conduct projects using appropriate research methods, ethical procedures and data analysis.

CRDN 1.6 Incorporate critical-thinking skills in overall practice.

Domain 2

2. Professional Practice Expectations: Beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the professional dietitian nutritionist level of practice. Competencies Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

CRDN 2.1 Practice in compliance with current federal regulations and state statutes and rules, as applicable, and in accordance with accreditation standards and the Scope of Nutrition and Dietetics Practice and Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics.

CRDN 2.2 Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications.

CRDN 2.3 Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings.

CRDN 2.4 Function as a member of interprofessional teams.

CRDN 2.5 Assign duties to NDTRs and/or support personnel as appropriate.

CRDN 2.6 Refer clients and patients to other professionals and services when needs are beyond individual scope of practice

CRDN 2.7 Apply leadership skills to achieve desired outcomes.

CRDN 2.8 Demonstrate negotiation skills.

CRDN 2.9 Participate in professional and community organizations.

CRDN 2.10 Demonstrate professional attributes in all areas of practice.

CRDN 2.11 Show cultural competence/sensitivity in interactions with clients, colleagues and staff.

CRDN 2.12 Perform self-assessment and develop goals for self-improvement throughout the program.

CRDN 2.13 Prepare a plan for professional development according to Commission on Dietetic Registration guidelines.

CRDN 2.14 Demonstrate advocacy on local, state or national legislative and regulatory issues or policies impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession.

CRDN 2.15 Practice and/or role play mentoring and precepting others.

Domain 3

3. Clinical and Customer Services: Development and delivery of information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations. Competencies Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

CRDN 3.1 Perform the Nutrition Care Process and use standardized nutrition language for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of settings.

CRDN 3.2 Conduct nutrition focused physical exams.

CRDN 3.3 Demonstrate effective communications skills for clinical and customer services in a variety of formats and settings.

CRDN 3.4 Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience.

CRDN 3.5 Develop nutrition education materials that are culturally and age appropriate and designed for the literacy level of the audience.

CRDN 3.6 Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change.

CRDN 3.7 Develop and deliver products, programs or services that promote consumer health, wellness and lifestyle management.

CRDN 3.8 Deliver respectful, science-based answers to client questions concerning emerging trends.

CRDN 3.9 Coordinate procurement, production, distribution and service of goods and services, demonstrating and promoting responsible use of resources.

CRDN 3.10 Develop and evaluate recipes, formulas and menus for acceptability and affordability that accommodate the cultural diversity and health needs of various populations, groups and individuals.

Domain 4

4. Practice Management and Use of Resources: Strategic application of principles of management and systems in the provision of services to individuals and organizations. Competencies Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

CRDN 4.1 Participate in management of human resources.

CRDN 4.2 Perform management functions related to safety, security and sanitation that affect employees, customers, patients, facilities and food.

CRDN 4.3 Conduct clinical and customer service quality management activities.

CRDN 4.4 Apply current nutrition informatics to develop, store, retrieve and disseminate information and data.

CRDN 4.5 Analyze quality, financial and productivity data for use in planning.

CRDN 4.6 Propose and use procedures as appropriate to the practice setting to promote sustainability, reduce waste and protect the environment.

CRDN 4.7 Conduct feasibility studies for products, programs or services with consideration of costs and benefits.

CRDN 4.8 Develop a plan to provide or develop a product, program or service that includes a budget, staffing needs, equipment and supplies.

CRDN 4.9 Explain the process for coding and billing for nutrition and dietetics services to obtain reimbursement from public or private payers, fee-for-service and value-based payment systems.

CRDN 4.10 Analyze risk in nutrition and dietetics practice.

Preceptor Resources

CDR Preceptors and Continuing Professional Education

<http://www.cdrcampus.com/>

The Commission on Dietetic Registration is offering the Dietetics Preceptor Training Program, free of charge, to help preceptors of dietetics students prepare for and excel in their important role. It includes 7 modules covering:

- Preparing for Your Role as Preceptor
- Planning for Student Learning
- Facilitating Student Learning
- Assessing Student Learning
- Communicating Effectively
- Managing Your Time
- Keeping Current

The program can be found on www.cdrcampus.com, and it is good for 8 CPEUs. Individuals completing the program will be able to access it at their convenience on CDR's online cam <http://www.cdrnet.org/vault/2459/web/files/PreceptorDocumentCPE.pdf>

Precepting

Learning acquired while serving as a preceptor for dietetics students in an Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) accredited dietetics program may be awarded CPEUs. ACEND defines a preceptor as a practitioner who serves as faculty for students/interns during supervised practice by overseeing practical experiences, providing one-on-one training, and modeling professional behaviors and values. :

In order to receive CPEU credit;

- The precepting must have been completed during the current recertification cycle.
- The preceptor must complete the Verification and Self-Reflection Form provided by the program director. The form must be signed and dated by the ACEND accredited program director. The form should be retained by the preceptor as documentation to be submitted to CDR if audited.

A maximum of 3 CPEUs per year or a total of 15 CPEUs per 5-year reporting period can be awarded to RDNs or RDs, and NDTRs or DTRs for this activity.

<https://www.cdrnet.org/cpeu-credit-for-preceptors>

