



DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION

**UNDERGRADUATE
DPD STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2025-2026

**The Sciences & Engineering Center and
The Commons (SECC)
155 University Ave.
West Chester, PA 19383**

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Welcome Letter

Dear DPD Students,

Welcome to the West Chester University Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD)! The Didactic Program in Dietetics is part of the Department of Nutrition. The Department has a long history of dietetic education, and has successfully prepared dietetic practitioners through a Didactic Program in Dietetics since 1997. The Nutrition Department added a Master's of Science in Community Nutrition degree program in 2015, and a Master's degree level Dietetic Internship program in 2019. As of January 1, 2024, it is required to have a Master's degree in order to sit for the Registration Examination for Dietitians administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

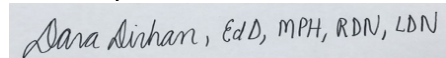
The dietetics curriculum integrates the principles derived from several disciplines, including nutrition, chemistry, biology, biochemistry, physiology, nutrient metabolism, food science, foodservice management, and the behavioral and social sciences. This integration of knowledge educates you to optimize human health through dietetics.

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics accredits the DPD. Upon successful completion of both the DPD and University requirements for the dietetics major, you will earn a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and a Verification Statement (VS). After your degree is conferred by the Registrar's office at the University level, you will receive a Verification Statement (VS) that you have completed all of the required accredited coursework. You will **NOT** be a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist upon completion of the DPD requirements and a bachelor's degree; they are only the first steps in becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. The next page explains the subsequent steps to becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.

Please remember that making regular appointments with your academic advisor to plan your program, develop your goals, and evaluate your progress will enhance your success. Make an appointment with your assigned academic advisor every semester before scheduling for the next semester due to course sequencing requirements on the curriculum guide. As the DPD

Director, I am very happy to meet with you and discuss your professional development. Departmental faculty will be able to answer questions about the dietetics and nutrition profession and career roles. All faculty members in the department participate in the undergraduate program in some way and are committed to helping you succeed in your academic endeavors. Do not hesitate to seek our guidance. Check the D2L Nutrition Resource Page frequently for postings about DPD information sessions, events, jobs, and volunteer opportunities. More information about the DPD is available throughout this handbook.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dara Dirhan, EdD, MPH, RDN, LDN". The signature is written in black ink on a light gray rectangular background.

Dara Dirhan, EdD, MPH, RDN, LDN

Associate Professor of Nutrition & DPD Director
West Chester University

Profession of Dietetics

Accreditation Status

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) accredits the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) at West Chester University. In 2025, we successfully completed program requirements for the maximum 7-year term for reaccreditation, and the program is fully accredited until 2032. The contact information for ACEND is:

*Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190
Chicago, IL 60606-6995*

Phone: 800/877-1600, ext. 5400

<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend>

Students earn a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and receive a DPD Verification Statement after successfully completing the DPD and University requirements. The degree and Verification Statement establish eligibility to apply for an ACEND accredited supervised practice program such as a Dietetic Internship (DI), Coordinated Program (CP), or Graduate Program (GP). The completion of the supervised practice program and completion of a master's degree qualify a person to take the national Registration Examination for Dietitians. Passing the exam results in the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) credential and eligibility to apply for state licensure in those states that provide licensure for dietitians.

Requirements to Become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

A Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) is a food and nutrition expert who has completed the following requirements:

- ◆ Bachelor's Degree from a U.S. regionally accredited institution (completing academic requirements from an ACEND accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics will culminate with a Verification Statement)
- ◆ Minimum of 1,000 hours of an ACEND accredited supervised practice program
- ◆ Master's Degree, effective as of January 1, 2024
- ◆ Successfully passed the Registration Examination for Dietitians administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)
- ◆ Remitted the annual registration fee
- ◆ Complied with the Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) recertification requirements

Some RDNs hold additional certifications in specialized practice areas, such as pediatric, gerontological, oncology, renal nutrition, nutrition support, sports dietetics, obesity and weight management, pediatrics, or diabetes education. These certifications are awarded through the CDR, and/or other medical and nutrition organizations recognized within the profession, but are NOT required.

Licensure/Certification

Dietitians are required to be licensed/certified in some states. Each state requirement is different and more information can be found on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website here: (<https://www.eatrightpro.org/advocacy/licensure/licensure-map>). Pennsylvania has a licensure requirement and information can be found at: <https://www.dos.pa.gov/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardsCommissions/Nursing/Pages/Licensed-Dietitian-Nutritionist-Licensure-Requirements-Snapshot.aspx>

Job Outlook & Salaries for Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) are employed in hospitals and other health care facilities, government and public health agencies, foodservice settings, schools, universities, supermarkets, private practice, and a variety of other professional settings. Opportunities for Registered Dietitians to be employed in the field of wellness, sports nutrition, pharmaceutical sales, foodservice sales, and marketing have had significant growth. The job outlook for dietitians is excellent.

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dietitians-and-nutritionists.htm>), "Employment of dietitians and nutritionists is expected to grow 11 percent from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations." Dietitians will be needed to provide care for patients with various medical conditions and to advise people who want to improve their overall health. The median annual salary for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists and Nutritionists was \$73,850 in May 2024. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$48,830, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$101,760. As with any profession, salaries and fees vary by region of the country, employment settings, scope of responsibility and supply of RDNs. Salaries increase with years of experience and according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 2021 *Compensation and Benefits*

Survey of the Dietetics Profession, median hourly wages are the highest in the following specific work settings:

- ◆ Pharmaceutical or nutrition products manufacturer, distributor, or retailer
- ◆ Food or equipment manufacturer, distributor, or retailer
- ◆ Contract food management company
- ◆ College, university, or academic medical setting

Sources: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dietitians-and-nutritionists.htm#tab-5> and <https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/career-development/career-toolbox/academy-member-compensation>.

Program Overview

Admission

The admission process to West Chester University of Pennsylvania as a first-year or transfer student, including deadlines, is described on the West Chester University website at https://www.wcupa.edu/admissions/sch_adm/. Students are accepted for all three semesters, spring, summer, and fall.

Tuition

A description of costs related to tuition and fees are outlined on the West Chester University Bursar's website. Because costs may vary each year, students should check with the Bursar's Office, 25 University Avenue, Room 50, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383, (610) 436-2552. All items below are per the 2023-2024 academic year. The 2023-2024 tuition rates and fees can be found at <https://www.wcupa.edu/information/AFA/Fiscal/Bursar/newStudentsFallSpringGeneral.aspx>.

Payment Information

A description of billing and payment information is outlined on West Chester University Bursar's website at <https://www.wcupa.edu/information/AFA/Fiscal/Bursar/billingInformation.aspx>.

Refund Information

A description of refund information is outlined on the West Chester University Registrar's website at <https://www.wcupa.edu/registrar/refundsWithdrawals.aspx>.

Financial Aid

A description of financial aid information is outlined on the West Chester University Financial Aid website at <https://www.wcupa.edu/financialAid/>. Additionally, students may contact The Office of Financial Aid, Kershner Student Service Center, Suite 30, 25 University Avenue, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383, (610) 436-2627.

Additional Estimated Costs to Students

Additional estimated costs to students include the following:

- Textbooks: \$500 per semester (estimated)
- One-time purchase of a Department of Nutrition polo shirt: \$25
- Purchase of an annual student membership to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: \$58 per year

Undergraduate Scholarships and Awards

Undergraduate scholarship and award information is outlined on the West Chester University Financial Aid website at <https://www.wcupa.edu/financialAid/scholarships.aspx>.

Academic Calendar

The Department of Nutrition follows the semester and summer schedule of West Chester University. The academic calendar is available on the West Chester University website at <https://www.wcupa.edu/registrar/calendar/>.

Withdrawal from the University and Leave of Absence from the Program

West Chester University allows for three types of withdrawals from the university: term withdrawal, university withdrawal, and administrative withdrawal. Please refer to the following West Chester University website and drop down the “Withdrawal from the University” tab: <https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/enrolling-in-withdrawing-from-courses/>.

If a student is inactive for two consecutive semesters, they would need to apply for readmission to the university and they would then be under the general education and DPD program requirements in place at the time of their readmission.

Mission

The mission of the West Chester University Didactic Program in Dietetics is to provide quality, inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible education that prepares students for careers in nutrition and dietetics, including supervised practice leading to eligibility for the CDR credentialing exam to become a registered dietitian nutritionist. The learning environment is structured to promote an appreciation for life-long learning, purposeful self-reflection, effective problem solving, and teamwork.

Goals & Objectives (Program outcome data is available to the public, including current and prospective students upon request to the Director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics)

Program Goal 1: Program graduates will be well-prepared in food and nutrition, clinical and community nutrition, education and research, and foodservice and nutrition systems management.

	Objectives
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1.1	At least 80% of students complete program requirements within 3 years (150% of planned program length).
1.2	A minimum overall mean score of 3.0 on graduating seniors' perception of the quality of the DPD program.
1.3	A minimum of 70% of DI directors, graduate program directors, or employment supervisors surveyed will "strongly agree" or "agree" that the program effectively prepares students for the supervised practice program, graduate program, or job.

Program Goal 2: Program graduates will be provided with a strong education in the basic sciences to enable graduates to work effectively with other health professionals and form the basis for attaining supervised practice, graduate study, and/or employment.

	Objectives
2.1	At least 30% of program graduates apply for admission to a supervised practice program prior to or within 12 months of graduation.
2.2	Of program graduates who apply to a supervised practice program, at least 50% are admitted within 12 months of graduation.
2.3	The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.
2.4	A minimum of 75% of alumni will record that they "strongly agree" or "agree" that the program was effective in preparing them for employment.
2.5	A minimum of 70% of five-year alumni will be employed in foodservice, nutrition, dietetics, or another health-related field.
2.6	A minimum of 80% of alumni will "strongly agree" or "agree" that the program was effective in preparing them in nutrition science.
2.7	A minimum of 60% of alumni will "strongly agree" or "agree" that the program was effective in preparing them with a basic science background that helped them to work with other nutrition and/or health professionals.

Nutrition Department Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes

1) Evidence Based Practice and Information Literacy: Students will integrate scientific information and research into practice.

2) Professional Practice: Students will demonstrate beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with ethical practice for food, nutrition and dietetics practitioners.

3) Clinical and/or Client Services Communication: Students will develop and deliver information, products, and services to diverse individuals, groups, and populations in written, oral, and other media formats.

4) Administration and Management: Students will apply the principles of management and systems-thinking in the provision of services to individuals and organizations.

5) Leadership and Career Management: Students will apply and assess their skills, strengths, knowledge and experience relevant to leadership and professional growth for food, nutrition and dietetics practitioners.

ACEND Core Knowledge Requirements

Knowledge Requirements for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (KRDN)

Student learning is assessed through performance on assessments on each of the following knowledge requirements. Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

1. Demonstrate how to locate, interpret, evaluate, and use professional literature to make ethical, evidence-based practice decisions.
2. Select and use appropriate current information technologies to locate and apply evidence-based guidelines and protocols.
3. Apply critical thinking skills.
4. Demonstrate effective and professional oral and written communication and documentation.
5. Describe the governance of nutrition and dietetics practice, such as the Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics.
6. Assess the impact of a public policy position on the nutrition and dietetics profession.
7. Discuss the impact of health care policy and different health care delivery systems on food and nutrition services.
8. Identify and describe the work of interprofessional teams and the roles of others with whom the registered dietitian nutritionist collaborates.
9. Demonstrate cultural humility, awareness of personal biases and an understanding of cultural differences as they contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
10. Describe contributing factors to health inequity in nutrition and dietetics including structural bias, social inequities, health disparities and discrimination.
11. Participate in a nutrition and dietetics professional organization and explain the significant role of the organization.
12. Defend a position on issues impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession.
13. Use the Nutrition Care Process and clinical workflow elements to assess nutritional parameters, diagnose nutrition-related problems, determine appropriate nutrition interventions, and develop plans to monitor the effectiveness of these interventions.
14. Develop an education session or program/educational strategy for a target population.
15. Demonstrate counseling and education methods to facilitate behavior change and enhance wellness for diverse individuals and groups.

16. Practice routine health screening assessments, including measuring blood pressure, and conducting waived point-of-care laboratory testing (such as blood glucose or cholesterol).
17. Describe concepts of nutritional genomics and how they relate to medical nutrition therapy, health, and disease.
18. Develop nutritionally sound meals, menus and menu plans that promote health and disease management and meet client/patient needs.
19. Apply management theories to the development of programs or services.
20. Evaluate budget/financial management plan and interpret financial data.
21. Demonstrate an understanding of the regulation system related to billing and coding, what services are reimbursable by third party payers, and how reimbursement may be obtained.
22. Apply the principles of human resource management to different situations.
23. Apply safety and sanitation principles related to food, personnel, and consumers.
24. Explain the process involved in delivering quality food and nutrition services.
25. Evaluate data to be used in decision-making for continuous quality improvement.
26. Perform self-assessment that includes awareness in terms of learning and leadership styles and cultural orientation and develop goals for self-improvement.
27. Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals.
28. Practice how to self-advocate for opportunities in a variety of settings (such as asking for needed support, presenting an elevator pitch).
29. Practice resolving differences or dealing with conflict.
30. Promote team involvement and recognize the skills of each member.
31. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance and expectations of a professional in mentoring and precepting others.

Curriculum and Program of Study

The DPD Program at West Chester University meets the requirements for the *Core Knowledge of the Registered Dietitian Nutritionists* established by ACEND (Appendix 1 – KRDN). Students must successfully complete all major courses in the DPD curriculum with a grade of “C” or higher and must meet all KRDN learning outcome benchmarks. The curriculum is developed to be sequential so that students move from basic knowledge to applied knowledge and skills. As such, it is important for students to follow the semester-by-semester sequencing. Students should schedule regular advising appointments with his/her undergraduate academic advisor in order to be guided appropriately along in the sequenced curriculum.

The courses and course descriptions for the DPD curriculum (B.S. Nutrition – Dietetics Concentration) are stated in the academic catalog. Refer to the following website for detailed information: <https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/health-sciences/nutrition/nutrition-bs-dietetics-concentration/>. A sample course plan can be found here: <https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/health-sciences/nutrition/nutrition-bs-dietetics->

[concentration/#samplecourseplantext](#). The DPD curriculum guide for the B.S. – Dietetics Concentration can be found on the Nutrition Department website here:
<https://www.wcupa.edu/healthSciences/nutritionAndDietetics/documents/DPD.pdf>.

Advisement

Each student is assigned an academic advisor in the Nutrition Department. Advisors play an integral role in assisting students through their college years; they aid students in:

- Planning a schedule of required courses
- Providing information about scholarships, professional organizations, and job openings
- Making plans for future career endeavors
- Identifying and marketing their strengths
- Communicating pre-professional and professional expectations
- Nurturing professional growth and development

Students have the option to request a specific advisor and/or change advisors. To request the change, contact the Chair of the Department of Nutrition.

Students should plan to meet with their advisor at least once each semester before or during self-scheduling. Each advisor handles the scheduling of advisement appointments differently. A student should email his/her advisor and ask how to schedule an appointment. Before meeting with their advisor, students will want to study the Curriculum Guide and RamPortal Schedule, and then prepare a written schedule for themselves. Students will need to take their curriculum guide to advising sessions. The curriculum guide, which keeps an ongoing record of a student's completed and not yet completed courses, aids faculty in the advising process. Students should apply for graduation once they have completed 90 credit hours. **Please note that advisors guide students through a program. A student is ultimately responsible for his or her own schedule, understanding curriculum contents, effective progression through the program, and meeting graduation requirements. To track academic progress, a student can access and follow their Degree Audit through RamPortal.** Students should access their RamPortal account for their assigned course scheduling appointment date each semester. The appointment date is the date and time a student can begin enrolling in courses (not a scheduled appointment with an advisor). A student needs to be fully aware of all general education and degree requirements as s/he plans their course schedule. The dietetics DPD curriculum guide with this information can be obtained from the Nutrition Department secretary in the SECC Building, Room 258. The curriculum guide is also posted on the Nutrition Department website at <https://www.wcupa.edu/healthSciences/nutritionAndDietetics/documents/DPD.pdf>.

Scheduling

Undergraduate degree students can self-schedule on the internet using RamPortal. Scheduling dates and times are also located on RamPortal. A student logs in using his/her WCU username and password. Access the following link for more information about Registration and Enrollment: <https://www.wcupa.edu/registrar/registration.aspx>. Access the following link for a

detailed video regarding scheduling classes in RamPortal:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeScmHfVuFg>.

Declaration of Intent

A Declaration of Intent (DOI) will be issued to DPD students who are applying to a supervised practice program prior to graduation through DICAS (Dietetics Inclusive Central Application Service). The Declaration of Intent is necessary for the dietetic internship application process as it declares the student's intent to complete the courses prior to the start of the supervised practice program. To process a DOI, the student must make an account on DICAS and request to have an email sent to the DPD Program Director by DICAS. The DPD Program Director will then complete the DOI through DICAS.

Verification Statement Policy

A Verification Statement (VS) is an official document that signifies that the student has met all academic and professional requirements as dictated by ACEND of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for the West Chester University DPD program. A Verification Statement is earned when a student has (a) met all DPD course KRDN learning outcomes benchmarks, (b) earned a grade of C or higher in all DPD courses, and (c) earned their bachelor's degree in nutrition with a concentration in Dietetics. Students who do not meet all items in the previous sentence, will not receive a DPD verification statement from the program until the benchmarks and a course grade of C or higher is earned. In the event a student does not meet a KRDN benchmark during a course, the student must remediate the assignment until they've met the benchmark to earn their verification statement. Remediating benchmarks will not change grade outcomes and remediation plans are at the discretion of the professor. Students not achieving a C or higher will have to repeat the course. Upon successfully completing the requirements to earn a VS, the DPD Program Director will issue an official electronic VS to the student. The VS verifies successful completion of the DPD but does not guarantee the student a dietetic internship (DI) or supervised practice program. With the DPD VS, the student is eligible to apply for an ACEND dietetic internship program (one type of supervised practice program), as well as all other supervised practice program types (such as GPs). Acceptance of the graduate into a supervised practice program is competitive.

Accelerated BS to MSCN Program

DPD students who complete a minimum of 72 credit hours and who hold a GPA of 3.2 or higher are invited to apply to the accelerated BS to MSCN program. The program allows accepted students to take up to four graduate courses during their final year in the DPD program. These courses satisfy four undergraduate electives in addition to counting as four graduate courses. As a money-saving benefit, these credits are priced at the undergraduate cost per credit. Students can apply to the program on RamPortal by locating the "Student Forms" card and then clicking on the "Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's Degree Enrollment Request Form" link. Applications to this program are accepted on a "rolling admissions" basis. Students interested

in this program should speak with their advisor or contact the Department of Nutrition Graduate Coordinator for more information.

Accelerated BS to MSCN-DI Program

DPD students who complete a minimum of 72 credit hours and who hold a GPA of 3.5 or higher are invited to apply to the accelerated BS to MSCN-DI program. The program allows accepted students to take up to four graduate courses during their final year in the DPD program. These courses satisfy four undergraduate electives in addition to counting as four graduate courses. As a money-saving benefit, these credits are priced at the undergraduate cost per credit. Additionally, the program allows accepted students to complete the remainder of their graduate coursework plus their dietetic internship rotations and coursework in year 5, after completing years 1-4 in the undergraduate program and using their 4 electives in their final year to take the 4 established graduate courses. Students must apply separately for admission into the accelerated MSCN portion of the program and the accelerated DI portion of the program. Students can apply to the accelerated MSCN portion of the program on RamPortal by locating the “Student Forms” card and then clicking on the “Accelerated Bachelor’s to Master’s Degree Enrollment Request Form” link. Applications to the MSCN portion of the program are accepted on a “rolling admissions” basis. Students must apply separately to the accelerated DI portion of the program through DICAS via this link: <https://dicas.cas.myliaison.com/applicant-ux/#/login>. Applications to the DI portion of the program open in early August with an application deadline of January 15th. Students must wait to request their transcripts until the minimum of 72 credits has been met before submitting their DICAS application (generally until fall semester final grades have been posted). Students interested in this program should speak with their advisor or contact the Department of Nutrition Graduate Coordinator and the Department of Nutrition Dietetic Internship Director for more information.

Earning the RDN Credential

Step 1: Earn a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited four-year institution

Step 2: Application to and completion of a post-baccalaureate accredited Dietetic Supervised Practice Program

The next step to earning the RDN credential, graduates of the DPD must successfully complete an accredited pre-professional program in dietetics that includes supervised practice hours and the completion of a graduate degree. Students who have earned a Verification Statement (VS) from an accredited dietetics program are eligible to apply to all supervised practice program types, including dietetic internships (DIs), and graduate programs (GPs). Students who have not earned a VS are ineligible to apply to the DI supervised practice program type, and are ONLY eligible to apply to the GP supervised practice program type. Dietetic internships with a Master’s degree include a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised practice experience and graduate coursework. They are 15 to 24 months in length. Graduate Programs (GPs) are competency-based programs that combine graduate level courses with supervised experiences to meet accreditation standards. GPs are 18 to 24 months in length. Both dietetic

internship/graduate degree programs and GPs charge tuition to complete the program; tuition costs vary between programs. Additional information on these programs can be found on ACEND's website at <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs>.

Step 3: Passing the RDN registration examination

In the final step to earn the RDN credential, after successfully meeting the requirements of the dietetic internship/graduate program or GP, is passing the national registration examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. For more information regarding the examination, refer to CDR's website: <https://www.cdrnet.org/>.

Student Support Services and Campus Resources

West Chester University provides a wide range of resources designed to support and promote academic success and personal health and well-being, including but not limited to:

The Division of Student Affairs webpage

(<https://www.wcupa.edu/services/STU/departments.aspx>) provides a variety of support services for students.

The Learning Assistance and Resource Center (LARC) offers tutoring, success coaching, a writing center, academic success workshops, and help with employment on their webpage

(<https://www.wcupa.edu/universityCollege/larc/default.aspx>)

The Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) webpage

(<https://www.wcupa.edu/universityCollege/OEA/>) provides a variety of support services for students, including letters of accommodation, academic coaches, adaptive technology, and a proctoring center for testing.

The Student Health Services webpage

(<https://www.wcupa.edu/services/studentHealthServices/default.aspx>) provides personal health and well-being resources for students.

Financial Aid webpage (<https://www.wcupa.edu/financialAid/>) to explore financial aid, grants, loans, and more.

The Counseling and Psychological Services webpage

(<https://www.wcupa.edu/services/counselingCenter/default.aspx>) provides a variety of support services for students.

The West Chester University Libraries webpage (<https://library.wcupa.edu/home>) provides a variety of academic support services for students.

The Greg and Sandra Weisenstein Veterans Center webpage (<https://www.wcupa.edu/veteranscenter/>) provides a variety of support services for student veterans, military service members, reservists, and their families.

Academic Policies and Procedures

The WCU Undergraduate Catalog, Academic Policies and Procedures section (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/>), contains detailed information about the following subjects:

- Academic Integrity
- Academic Records Information
- Academic Services
- Affiliated Academic Organizations
- Course Policies
- Degree Information
- Enrolling in and Withdrawing from Courses
- Final Exam Information
- Grade Information
- Graduation Requirements and Information
- Maintenance of Academic Standards
- Non-Degree Students
- Services for Students with Disabilities
- Transfer, Reverse Transfer, AP, and Other Credits

Student Performance Monitoring

The Deputy Provost's webpage (<https://www.wcupa.edu/admin/provost/probationDismissal.aspx>) provides information regarding university policy on academic standing, academic warning, probation, and dismissal.

The Undergraduate catalog provides grade information on this webpage (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/grading-information/>). Meetings with academic advisors take place at least once each semester to plan for courses and address students' performance concerns.

Student Remediation and Retention

Progression through the DPD depends on successfully completing the prerequisite courses and meeting KRDN benchmarks in KRDN-assessed courses. Meetings with academic advisors take place at least once each semester to track and discuss students' progress in moving through the DPD curriculum and come up with a plan for how best to proceed.

For prerequisite courses, a grade of C or better must be earned before advancing to the next course. For example, to enter the junior-level NTD 370 nutrient metabolism course, a student must earn a grade of C or better in both CHE 107 introductory chemistry and NTD 303 introductory nutrition. Students who are unable to satisfactorily complete prerequisites should discuss this with their academic advisor and discuss repeating the prerequisites until the grade of C or better is earned, or, discuss changing their major to lifestyle nutrition or declare a different major. Tutoring through the LARC (<https://www.wcupa.edu/universityCollege/larc/>) is highly encouraged by academic advisors when a course needs to be repeated. The decision to change majors is driven by the student.

For courses where KRDN benchmarks are assessed, the student must earn a grade of B- or higher on the KRDN assessment. If the student does not meet the KRDN benchmark, the student must work with their instructor and remediate the assignment by the final week in the semester, until a grade of B- or higher is earned, but their original grade remains. Students who fail to meet a KRDN benchmark or who choose not to remediate, will not earn a DPD verification statement. Please refer to the Requirement to Receive Verification Statement Policy for more information regarding how to earn a verification statement.

Formal Assessment of Student Learning and Regular Reports of Performance and Progress

Formal assessment of student learning occurs in each course using examinations and assignments according to the grading policy outlined in the course syllabus. Further information on grades and the grading system at West Chester University can be found in the undergraduate catalog here: (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/grading-information/>).

Discussion of student progress through the major takes place in a meeting between the student and their academic advisor at least once per semester. Students must meet with their academic advisor in the program to enroll in classes for the next semester. At the meeting, the student's progress through the major is discussed and a plan is made for the next semester.

Identity Verification Procedures

Some courses in the curriculum of the DPD program use distance instruction and/or online testing. In order to verify the identity of the student completing the distance course and/or taking an online assessment, students are required to sign into the Learning Management System with their West Chester University email address and password. Once a student successfully signs into the LMS, this is an expression of academic integrity that the student viewing the online course and/or taking the online assessment (quiz, exam, etc) matches the inputted student login credentials. Any behavior outside of this above mentioned sentence would be an act of academic misconduct. Please review WCU's Academic Integrity policies and violations of academic integrity here: <https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/academic-integrity/>.

Equitable Treatment

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance Affirmative Action-Equal Opportunity Policy:

(<https://www.wcupa.edu/admin/diversityEquityInclusion/affirmativeAction.aspx>).

Additionally, refer to the Moon Shot for Equity: (<https://www.wcupa.edu/moonShot/>).

Protection of Privacy of Student Information

Policies on the protection of privacy of student information, including student access to their own student file can be found on the Registrar's website here:

(<https://www.wcupa.edu/registrar/privacy.aspx>).

Disciplinary/Termination Procedures

The undergraduate DPD adheres to University procedures for discipline and termination. A description of probation and dismissal procedures can be found in the undergraduate catalog under Maintenance of Academic Standards here:

(<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/maintenance-academic-standards/>).

Credit for Prior Learning Policy

Experiential learning hours will not count for credit for prior learning (CFPL) and will not be granted to meet WCU's DPD requirements. However, students may transfer credit for DPD courses from other institutions. Assessing transfer credit begins in the university Registrar's office which will decide whether a course is transferred as equivalent to a WCU course or not. If a course is not deemed a transfer equivalent by the Registrar's office, the DPD Director can determine equivalency of a DPD course from another institution. To do so, the DPD Director will review the syllabus of the transfer course for equivalent KRDNs to determine whether the transfer course will fulfill the WCU DPD requirements.

Refer also to the undergraduate catalog for transfer credit policies:

(<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/transfer-ap-other-credits/>).

KRDN Benchmark and Verification Statement Accountability Acknowledgement Policy

By signing this document, students are acknowledging their receipt of verbal and written syllabus information associated with the critical importance of achieving all Knowledge Requirements for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (KRDN) benchmarks for their dietetics program. KRDNs are benchmarks in the curriculum that provide mastery evidence of course learning objectives. If not mastered, KRDNs must be repeated until passed. Further, by signing this document, students assume responsibility for completing and successfully passing each required KRDN benchmark for their respective courses in alignment with the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) Verification Statement below. Earning a verification statement during undergraduate work is a crucial step to becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). The verification statement is another form of evidence an RDN candidate has mastered undergraduate dietetic competencies. Without the verification statement, a student graduating with their B.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics will not be able to participate in a dietetic internship program.

A verification statement is earned when a student has (a) met all course KRDN learning outcomes benchmarks, (b) earned a grade of C or higher in all DPD courses, and (c) earned their bachelor's degree in nutrition with a concentration in Dietetics. Students who do not meet all items in the previous sentence, will not receive a DPD verification statement from the program until the benchmarks and a course grade of C or higher is earned. In the event a student does not meet a KRDN benchmark during a course, the student must remediate the assignment until they've met the benchmark to earn their verification statement. Remediating benchmarks will not change grade outcomes and remediation plans are at the discretion of the professor. Students not achieving a C or higher will have to repeat the course.

I _____, have received information verbally and in

printed student name

writing via the course syllabus from my course professor and understand while they guide me through completing each KRDN throughout my dietetics program, the sole responsibility for completing each is my own.

student signature

date

In the event a dietetics student refuses to sign this KRDN policy contract, a witness acknowledging their refusal should print and sign below.

printed witness name

date

witness signature

date

Course Name/Number

Semester/Year

Requirement to Receive Verification Statement Policy

A verification statement is earned when a student has (a) met all course KRDN learning outcomes benchmarks, (b) earned a grade of C or higher in all DPD courses, and (c) earned their bachelor's degree in nutrition with a concentration in Dietetics. Students who do not meet all items in the previous sentence, will not receive a DPD verification statement from the program until the benchmarks and a course grade of C or higher is earned. In the event a student does not meet a KRDN benchmark during a course, the student must remediate the assignment until they've met the benchmark to earn their verification statement. Remediating benchmarks will not change grade outcomes and remediation plans are at the discretion of the professor. Students not achieving a C or higher will have to repeat the course.

Verification Statement Procedures

Upon graduation in December and May, the DPD director will review the files of all students receiving BS degrees in Nutrition from the dietetics major. Verification statements will be issued to those students who fulfill all requirements for the university and the dietetics major (DPD grade requirements and KRDN learning outcomes benchmarks) specified during the year they entered the program. The course requirements for the major as outlined in the undergraduate catalog for the year the student entered the program (and reflected in the student's degree progress report) will be adhered to as the graduation course requirements. A digitally signed and validated copy of the verification statement will be emailed to the graduate and one copy will remain on file in the department. Verification statements will be emailed to the graduate within six weeks of graduation.

Graduation and Program Completion Requirements

To graduate, 120 credits and a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 2.00 must be earned, and a grade of C or better must have been obtained by the student in all DPD courses. Further, to qualify for graduation, a student must take at least 30 of their last 60 credits at West Chester University, and in addition, a student must take at least 50% of the courses in their major discipline (excluding cognate courses) at West Chester University. More information regarding requirements for graduation can be found in the undergraduate catalog here:

(<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/graduation-requirements-information/>). A student must apply online for graduation once s/he has completed 90 credits. It is imperative that students meet with their academic advisor. The deadlines for when to apply are posted on The Office of the Registrar's website

<https://www.wcupa.edu/registrar/graduation.aspx>. Students who need to take summer courses to complete degree requirements are considered 'Summer' graduation applicants. Summer graduation applicants may participate in May commencement exercises if they apply by the deadline.

DPD verification statements are issued to students meeting the graduation requirements for the university and the dietetics major (DPD grade requirements and KRDN learning outcomes benchmarks).

Maximum Time for Program Completion

West Chester University does not have a formal limit on the amount of time a student can take to complete degree requirements. Credits do not expire. If a student is inactive for two consecutive semesters, they would need to apply for readmission to the university and they would then be under the general education and DPD program requirements in place at the time of their readmission.

Grievances

Grievances Related to the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD)

Students in the Didactic Program in Dietetics can have their complaints resolved informally by first speaking directly to the course instructor to see if the issue can be resolved. The second place to discuss a complaint would be the student's academic advisor within the Department of Nutrition. The advisor can tap a variety of school and/or university resources to help students solve problems. The third possibility for students is to speak with the DPD Director. The fourth possibility for students is to speak with the Chair of the Nutrition Department. After that, the student can speak with the Associate Dean of the College of Health Sciences to discuss issues and complaints without fear of retaliation. Student complaints at any level will be handled with confidentiality. If the application of informal procedures does not resolve the situation, the undergraduate student has the right to seek redress for academic grievances through the West Chester University Student Complaint Process, outlined here:

<https://www.wcupa.edu/HEA/complaint.aspx>

Grievances Against the DPD to ACEND

Students must follow the University policies for grievance resolution prior to submitting a complaint directly to the accrediting organization, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). If the student deems it necessary to file a complaint with ACEND he/she needs to be aware of the following: ACEND has established a process for reviewing complaints against accredited programs in order to fulfill its public responsibility for assuring the quality and integrity of the educational programs that it accredits. Any individual, for example, student, faculty, dietetics practitioner and/or member of the public may submit a complaint against any accredited program to ACEND. However, the ACEND board does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admissions, appointment, promotion, or dismissal of faculty or students. It acts only upon a signed allegation that the program may not be in compliance with the accreditation standards or policies. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints are not considered. For further information refer to: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/public-notices-and-announcements/filing-a-complaint-with-acend>.

Professional Standards

Professionalism

Students enrolled in the West Chester University Didactic Program in Dietetics are expected to exhibit professionalism in demeanor, dress, attitude, and behaviors showing respect to fellow students, faculty, and administrators and all persons encountered while on and off campus. Considerations include the following:

Professional Demeanor

Students are expected at all times to behave in a manner consistent with the standards set forth in the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics. The Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics can be viewed here:

<https://www.eatrightpro.org/-/media/files/eatrightpro/practice/code-of-ethics/codeofethicshandout.pdf?rev=e70b72588c044984a6b93cff61bcb793>.

Communications by email should use appropriate grammar and punctuation and should not use text messaging format. In addition, students should not engage in communications which are disparaging or critical of West Chester University, West Chester University faculty, the dietetics program, fellow students, or any field site, or which are clearly offensive to any reasonable person. It is important to address faculty by their appropriate title (Dr. or Prof.) as the case may be. Students should make an effort to respond to email messages and voice mail messages from instructors and professional contacts in a timely manner (within 24 hours).

Particular attention should be paid to avoiding posting of such information on a public/electronic forum. Please keep in mind that while away from campus, students are acting as an ambassador for West Chester University, the Department of Nutrition, the program, and the profession.

Professional Dress

Students are expected to be neat, clean, and well-groomed at all times. Professional dress should project an image of self-confidence, self-respect, and respect for others. Situations in which professional dress may be appropriate include class presentations, sessions with guest speakers, meetings with professors, professional events, interviews, service-learning experiences, work, and volunteer experiences. Students are expected to comply with all dress-code requirements for sites off campus where work, volunteer, externship, and internship experiences may occur. Remember, you are representing yourself, the profession, and West Chester University. Professional image and first impressions cannot be underestimated.

Class Attendance, Participation, and Preparation

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, arrive on time, and remain until dismissed. Individual instructors may have additional attendance classroom policies outlined in their syllabi. If you must miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in advance of anticipated absences, late arrivals, or early departures. Students are expected to refrain from class disturbances, including being mindful of screen time on any type of technological device (laptop, cell phone, tablet, etc.) and to adhere to the policies of individual instructors. Instructors expect students to prepare fully for each class, and to come to class prepared and ready to participate to the student's fullest extent. Respect in the classroom is always expected between classmates and between students and professors. Students are to make a conscientious effort to meet and exceed the expectations of the dietetics curriculum. In all situations and circumstances, students are expected to conduct themselves ethically, honestly, and with integrity.

Professional Involvement and Participation

Students are encouraged to become active in the profession as soon as they are admitted to the major. A Nutrition and Dietetics Student Resource Page has been established on D2L which

is updated regularly to provide students with information about scholarships, events, informational sessions, clubs, jobs, volunteer opportunities, conferences, etc. A link to the D2L page can be found here: <https://d2l.wcupa.edu/d2l/home/3907448>. Please email the DPD Director if you cannot access this page, to request access. A number of opportunities, listed below, are available to gain professional experience, develop leadership skills, and provide service.

Student Dietetic Association

The Student Dietetic Association (SDA), founded in 2000, is the University's student-run organization for Nutrition students. The purpose of the SDA is to further the individual welfare of its members; service the West Chester community; broaden knowledge in the field of dietetics; and facilitate the exchange of information and experience by promoting camaraderie among students, educators, and professionals throughout the community. The SDA is committed to providing leadership and professional development opportunities to its members via professional presentations, seminars and documentaries created to enhance nutrition course concepts, mentoring programs designed to create and enhance positive personal and professional networking relationships between students, faculty, alumni, and healthcare professionals, participation in campus and community nutrition outreach programs, and officer positions within SDA.

Benefits of membership include service learning, experiences, networking opportunities, recognition for service on a resume, and an opportunity to improve one's marketability. Information regarding SDA membership and functions can be obtained from nutrition faculty members.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) is the nation's largest professional organization for dietitians, diet technicians, and dietetic professionals. The AND was founded in 1917 and its purpose is to promote optimal health and nutritional status of the population through the provision of direction and leadership for quality dietetic practice, education, and research.

Student membership in the AND is recommended for DPD students. Membership for students is offered at a substantially reduced rate. Students should visit the AND's website at <http://www.eatrightpro.org> for the latest student membership rates and to join as a student member. There are many benefits to professional membership including access to the Evidence Analysis Library, reduced registration fees for attendance at the annual Food and Nutrition Expo (FNCE), and a subscription to the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (JAND). Student membership and professional involvement should be noted on your resume.

The Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (PAND)

The Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (PAND) (<http://www.eatrightpa.org>) is Pennsylvania's organization for dietetic professionals. Students joining the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics includes membership in the state affiliate organization, PAND, if

students identify Pennsylvania as their state. The PAND allows students the opportunity to participate in annual meetings, as well as begin to network with dietetic practitioners. The Pennsylvania affiliate also offers other benefits such as scholarships and awards for students.

The Philadelphia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (PhillyAND)

The Philadelphia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (PhillyAND)

(<http://www.eatrightphiladelphia.org>) is the district association for dietetic professionals in our geographical region of Pennsylvania. The PhillyAND provides students an opportunity to attend professional meetings, interact with dietetic professionals, and develop professionally. While students who join the AND automatically become members of PAND, they do not automatically become members of PhillyAND. Visit their website above to learn more about becoming a student member.

ACEND Accredited Supervised Practice

The options for ACEND accredited supervised practice programs include a dietetic internship (DI), a master's degree combined with a coordinated program or internship, and a graduate program (GP). The ACEND website provides a description of each accredited program type via this link: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs>. Regardless of which program type a student chooses to pursue, students will want to consider the following before applying:

- Part time or full time
- Length of the program
- Grant a master's degree, earn graduate credit, or offer no graduate credit at all
- Number of students accepted
- Emphasis: general, clinical, community/public health, food management, etc.
- Location of program
- Cost

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has developed an online application process for supervised practice programs. The system, Dietetic Inclusive Centralized Application System (DICAS) allows applicants to submit application materials online and supervised practice programs will access the information from DICAS. There is a \$50.00 fee for the first application and \$25.00 for each additional application. DICAS may be accessed at <https://dicas.cas.myliaison.com/applicant-ux/#/login>.

Students interested in applying to a supervised practice program should review the ACEND Accredited Programs Directory by visiting, <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/accredited-programs-directory> to locate ACEND accredited programs.

Disclaimer

Students enrolled in the West Chester University Didactic Program in Dietetics must abide by all professional standards and policies outlined within the Didactic Program in Dietetics Student Handbook and the West Chester University student policies. Failure to act in accordance with professional standards will result in formal review by the Program Director, and other university administrators. Violations will be addressed on an individual case basis and may result in a leave of absence or dismissal from the program.