

Nutrition and Dietetics Program Western Kentucky University



Student Handbook of Policies and Procedures

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Section 1. General Information

Mission of the Nutrition & Dietetics Program

We prepare students for careers as dietetic professionals by providing the knowledge and skills needed to improve the quality of life of those they serve.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Program graduates will become dietetic professionals.

- 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%.
- 65% of surveyed program graduates will become employed in dietetics or dietetics related fields.
- The mean graduate rating on the quality of preparation for a professional career related to the field will be a minimum of 3.5 on a scale from 1.0 to 5.0, with 5.0 being the best level of preparation.

Goal 2: Program graduates will be prepared for supervised practice experiences that lead to eligibility for the Commission on Dietetic Registration Examination.

Program completion: 80% of students enrolled in the professional courses in the third year of the DPD program are expected to complete program/degree requirements within three years

- At least 80% of students complete program requirements within three years (150% of planned program length).
- At least 65% of program graduates apply for admission to a supervised practice program prior to or within 12 months of graduation.
- Of program graduates who apply to a supervised practice program, at least 50% are admitted within 12 months of graduation.
- Within 12 months of graduation the mean rating on graduate performance as assessed by internship directors of DPD graduates, will be a minimum of 3.5 on a scale from 1.0 to 5.0, with 5.0 being the best level of preparation.
- The mean graduate rating on the quality of preparation for an internship will be at least a 3.5 on a scale from 1.0 to 5.0, with 5.0 being the best level of preparation.

Program outcomes data are available upon request. Student learning outcomes are on the [program website](#).

Accreditation Status

The Nutrition and Dietetics Program at WKU is currently accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606, 312/899-5400, www.eatrightpro.org/acend .

For information regarding:

- Accredited programs for dietitian/nutrition students: Coordinated Programs, Didactic Programs and Dietetic Internships
- Accredited programs for dietetic technician students
- Computer matching for dietetic internships

- Sponsoring organizations eligibility requirements, Standards of Education, and policies for accreditation refer to www.eatright.org/ACEND .

Estimated Program Costs

Lab coat to be used in HMD 151 and HMD 251	\$20
Lab fees for HMD 151 and 251	\$75 per lab
Student liability insurance for HMD 464*	\$35+
TB skin test series, vaccinations/titers and physical exam for HMD 464*	\$280
Background check and drug screen for HMD 464*	\$100
Tuition, Kentucky Resident**	\$5,556
Tuition, Non-resident**	\$13,500
DICAS application fee	\$50 + \$25 for each additional application
D&D Digital	\$55

* Expenses for HMD 464 are needed if required by the site.

**Tuition rates are per semester. Rates change annually. You are encouraged to check for the current rate and additional information from the WKU Office of the Bursar website: https://www.wku.edu/bursar/tuition_fees_2223.php

Other expenses and fees per semester, such as for meals, books and more may be found through the [WKU Office of the Bursar](#).

Financial Assistance

Financial aid is available through the University. <https://www.wku.edu/financialaid/>

A limited number of professional scholarships are available through the Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics. Application qualifications and forms are available at the following link: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/membership/student-member-center/scholarships-and-financial-aid>

Distance Education Requirements

The majority of courses required for the Nutrition & Dietetics program are only offered through face-to-face instruction, particularly those offered through the Hospitality Management and Dietetics division. The elective courses HMD 364 Sports Nutrition and HMD 368 Dietary and Herbal Supplements are only offered online. Web based sections of HMD 211 Human Nutrition and some of the supporting courses required for the major are

available. Students must be proficient in Blackboard and basic computer use in order to be successful in web based courses. Computer labs and wireless internet are available on campus. However, the student will need to purchase a computer and internet access should he/she require access to online course materials from home. Assistance with computing issues can be found by contacting the [IT Helpdesk](#). Procedures for assuring the identity of students enrolled in distance education classes is located below, under Division of Extended Learning and Outreach (DELO) Testing Services and Verification of Student Identity.

Division of Extended Learning and Outreach (DELO) Testing Services and Verification of Student Identity

Some online courses utilize the DELO Testing Center to proctor online exams. Procedures for scheduling and taking exams with the DELO Testing Center are located on the [website](#). Procedures for verifying identity of test takers are:

1. Students testing at the testing center must present a valid government ID or WKU student ID for testing.
2. Student photographs are accessed in TopNet for visual identification of those students who fail to bring identification to the testing location.
3. All students must use their WKU login credentials to access exams administered in both proctored and unproctored settings.

In addition, online courses are delivered via Blackboard, a platform which requires student to use their WKU username and password to access the site.

Transportation

Students are responsible for transportation to any off-campus venues required for classes. The University does not provide any travel reimbursement for students traveling to off-campus sites. Students are also responsible for securing their own personal auto liability insurance. WKU is not liable for any accident or injury that occurs during travel required for college-related activities

Student Health Services

WKU students have access to Health Services. See the [WKU Health Services](#) website for more information.

Student Professional Liability Insurance

Students may need to purchase professional liability insurance for HMD 464 Applied Institution Management, if required by the site. One source is www.proliability.com ; with a minimum insurance of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate.

Student Health Insurance

All WKU students are advised to have personal health insurance, although this is not required. When in off-campus facilities for required learning experiences, neither the facility nor WKU is responsible for any costs related to student illness or injury. Insurance is needed to defray the cost of hospital and medical care for any illness or injury that might be sustained while in this program and the substantial monetary liability that you, as a student, might incur as a result of failure to have such insurance. If you are not currently covered, you may want to consider affordable student policies. Information regarding WKU's student health insurance can be found at <https://wku.myahpcare.com/> but you are not required to purchase through WKU.

Drug Testing and Criminal Background Checks

A background check and drug screening may be required by the practicum site for HMD 464. One source is CastleBranch www.castlebranch.com. CastleBranch provides both drug and background services. Other providers may be used.

Access to Counseling and Testing Services

WKU students have access to a variety of support services as specified in the WKU Student Handbook. The WKU Counseling and Testing Center, located in Potter Hall 409, provides personal counseling services and is responsible for the administration of national testing programs. Contact the Center for appointments and for test information at (270) 745-3159 or see the [website](#).

Tutoring Services

The Learning Center (TLC) provides tutoring for many general education courses. Courses for which tutoring is available and instructions for scheduling an appointment are located on [TLC website](#).

Academic Calendar

The academic calendar for WKU and the program can be found at the following link: https://www.wku.edu/registrar/academic_calendars/

Section 2. Path to Becoming a Registered Dietitian

Requirements for Becoming a Registered Dietitian/Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

To become a registered dietitian/registered dietitian nutritionist (RD/RDN) the following requirements must be completed:

1. Complete at least a bachelor's degree at an accredited college or university in the United States AND complete course work approved by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Completion of the CFND concentration in Nutrition and Dietetics, within the HMD major, at Western Kentucky University allows for the completion of the bachelor's degree AND the necessary course work. (See below for admission criteria).
2. Complete an internship that has been accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Students apply to these programs in their last year at Western Kentucky University and complete the programs after graduating from the University. Entrance into internships is competitive. An undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.3 to 3.5, relevant work experience, and volunteer experience aid in the preparation for an internship.
3. Pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.
4. Complete a Master's degree. Effective January 1, 2024, the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) will require a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). In order to be approved for registration examination eligibility with a bachelor's degree, an individual must meet all eligibility requirements and be submitted into CDR's Registration Eligibility Processing System (REPS) before **12:00 midnight Central Time, December 31, 2023**. For more information about this requirement visit CDR's website [here](#).

5. After gaining status as a RD/RDN, continuing professional education is needed to maintain registration status.
6. In addition to earning registration status through the Commission on Dietetic Registration, individual states may have laws regarding licensure/certification regarding dietitians and nutritionists. For example, the Kentucky Division of Occupations and Professions has a Board of Dietitians and Nutritionists. In order to be a licensed dietitian in the state of Kentucky, the RD/RDN credential and 15 hours of continuing education per year are required. For more information about state licensure requirements [click here](#).

Admission Requirements of the WKU Nutrition and Dietetics Program

- For admission into the dietetics program at Western Kentucky University, students must be admitted to Western Kentucky University as a degree-seeking student and must have a minimum G.P.A. of 3.0 on at least 30 college credit hours.
- The 30 credit hours must include: Anatomy and Physiology (BIOL 131), Introductory Statistics (MATH 183), and Fundamentals of College Chemistry (CHEM 105), with a minimum grade of "C" for these pre-admission courses. The 30 credit hours must also include HMD 211 Human Nutrition with a minimum grade of "B."
- A composite ACT of 20 or SAT (critical reading + math) of 950 is also needed for program admission.

Admission Process of the WKU Nutrition and Dietetics Program

Students who meet the above admission requirements can apply to the Nutrition and Dietetics Program by completing the [Admission Application](#) and submitting it to their advisor. Submitted applications are processed by the DPD director at the end of the fall and spring semesters.

Internship Programs

- Internships are the second step to becoming a RD/RDN. An internship is completed after the undergraduate degree is obtained.
- Internships are located in many universities, colleges and hospitals across the United States.
- A list of all internships is available on the website of the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#), and from the undergraduate program director at WKU.
- In HMD 459 Senior Seminar, students develop a list of supervised practice programs that may be of interest and begin preparation of the internship application.
- In the last year of the program, students may wish to visit an internship or attend an internship open house.

Becoming a Competitive Internship Applicant

- Historically, there has been a national shortage of internship openings, compared to the number of students applying to internships. Typically, only about half of the students who applied nationally received a placement into an internship. The internship matching process has not been as competitive in the last few years, but students are still strongly advised to follow the below suggestions to maximize their chances of receiving a placement.
- Internships each set application standards and guidelines. Thus, criteria for selection into different programs may vary from internship to internship. Some internships do require the GRE for program admission.

- **Earn excellent grades.** An undergraduate grade point average of at least a 3.3 to 3.5 is advisable to be competitive for a supervised practice program. However, having a strong GPA will not ensure entrance into an internship. Internships also review the GPA of courses required for the major, and may also focus on the science-related GPA. The higher the GPAs, the better chance a student may have of gaining entrance into an internship. Internships set their own admission standards.
- **Gain relevant work experience.** Positions as dietary aides or diet assistants in hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities provide valuable experience. In these facilities, students also gain work experience as cooks and diet supervisors. Other work experience in the food service industry, such as server positions or cashiers in fast food restaurants, can be beneficial; however, the degree of importance placed on these types of work experience may vary from internship to internship.
- **Gain dietetic-related volunteer experiences,** as available. Examples of volunteer experiences include assisting with events sponsored by the health department, assisting with health and recruitment fairs at WKU or off-campus, and shadowing dietitians in the workplace. Other opportunities based on personal motivation and interest can also be completed.
- **Get involved in extracurricular activities.** Membership in the Student Dietetic Association, Phi Upsilon Omicron Honor Society, and/or other on- and off-campus activities can be of benefit. Participation in such organizations and holding an office can increase your leadership and interpersonal skills and can provide volunteer opportunities.
- **Manage your time and prioritize.**
- **Be a respectful, conscientious student and employee.** When applying to supervised practice programs, you will need letters of recommendation. Practice good interpersonal skills and work hard in classes and on the job. Be on time and have a positive attitude.

Preparation of Internship Applications

- Obtain current information (within past three to six months) from programs of interest.
- Follow program directions very carefully.
- Apply to at least 5 programs. You will be matched to **one** program, however applying to multiple programs is necessary as you only have as many opportunities as you create for yourself. However, do NOT apply to programs that you will not really be willing to attend. Failure to accept a position to which you have been matched is damaging to you, the student, the internship program and the WKU undergraduate Nutrition and Dietetics program.
- Talk to your program director or advisor at WKU about the application process and attend HMD 459 Senior Seminar meetings concerning the application process.
- Read the complete information about the computer matching policy and procedures used to apply to most dietetic internships at the website of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
- **Verification Statements versus Declarations of Intent:** If you have graduated, you will receive a Verification Statement. If you have NOT graduated, you will receive a Declaration of Intent that identifies the courses needed to complete program and graduation requirements. The verification statement will be emailed to you following completion of program requirements and graduation. Thus, you will need to provide the program director at WKU with an email address that the verification statement can be sent to. You must submit the verification statement to

your internship director after you have been matched to a program. The verification statement also requires your full middle name, which you must provide to the WKU program director prior to graduation. To be eligible to receive a verification statement, and thus to be eligible for dietetic internships, all program and university requirements at WKU must be completed and students must demonstrate achievement of all core knowledge for dietitians and nutritionists (KRDNs). More information on graduation and verification statement requirements can be found below under Graduation and Program Completion Requirements and under Student Performance Monitoring, Remediation and Retention. WKU requirements are specified in the [WKU undergraduate catalog](#).

- **Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS):** Most internship programs utilize DICAS to receive and review internship applications. This is an online system to which you will submit your internship application, recommendation letters and transcripts.
- **D&D Digital Systems Computer Matching:** Most supervised practice programs participate in computer matching. An applicant rank orders his or her choices for an internship and will be matched to **one** program. A single fee for computer matching is charged. Computer matching applications are available through D&D Digital.

Section 3. Policies and Procedures

WKU Statement of Compliance

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to equal opportunity in its educational programs and employment. The University is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, age, uniform service, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions, or physical or mental disability. On request, WKU will provide reasonable accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services, necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs, activities, and employment.

The University has published policies and procedures for investigating and/or addressing discrimination or harassment in its educational programs and/or employment. If you believe you have experienced discrimination or harassment in such programs, activities, or employment, policies and procedures are included on the following website: <http://www.wku.edu/policies/> (WKU Policies), in addition to the WKU Student Handbook, and Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. These publications, including information about University procedures, are available on the University's website (www.wku.edu), at:

WKU Policies: <http://www.wku.edu/policies/>

WKU Student Handbook: <http://www.wku.edu/handbook/>

WKU Undergraduate Catalog: <https://catalog.wku.edu/undergraduate>

WKU Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate>

Equitable Treatment

The Nutrition and Dietetics Program at Western Kentucky University is committed to equitable treatment. The program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, age, uniform service, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions, physical or mental disability, size or socioeconomic status.

On request, WKU will provide reasonable accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services. Students may request these accommodations through the Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC): <https://www.wku.edu/sarc/>

Student Code of Conduct

It is the expectation of The Office of Student Conduct that all student behavior reflect that of a WKU student. As a student you are to be guided by the principles of an active citizen in our community. As a member of this community you are expected to respect the rights of others in the greater spirit of higher education, no matter what your role may be. The Office of Student Conduct expects high standards of students both in and out of the classroom, on or off-campus. Please know that any behavior that does not demonstrate that of a good citizen may result in your introduction to the [University Conduct Process](#). The full [Student Code of Conduct](#) is available at: <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/student-code-of-conduct.php>

Academic Dishonesty

Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected, or a failing grade in the course without the possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary sanctions. Additional information regarding academic offenses can be found in the [undergraduate catalog](#) and on the [Office of Student Conduct](#) website.

Assessment of Prior Learning and Credit toward Program Requirements

Credit toward program requirements can only be earned through equivalent course work. Transfer credits from other universities are reviewed by the advisor and Registrar's Office. Course equivalency is determined through comparison of course descriptions, objectives and syllabi. Additional information is located in the [undergraduate catalog](#). International students who have completed nutrition and dietetics coursework outside of the US must have transcripts evaluated by a foreign degree evaluation agency approved by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. A list of [approved evaluation agencies](#) and [procedures and resources for international students](#) can be found on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website.

Access to Student Records

In accordance with federal law as established in 1974 by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Western Kentucky University maintains the confidentiality of student records and provides a student the right to inspect and review education records, the right to seek to amend those records, and the right to limit disclosure of information from the records. The full FERPA policy is located in the [undergraduate catalog](#) and through the [Registrar's Office](#).

Protection of Privacy

Basic guidelines regarding access to student files/educational records are found in the [undergraduate catalog](#) and are based on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Online access to academic records is secured through the use of a WKU id and password. Similarly, the WKU id and password are required for access to grades, assignments, notes and other course materials that are posted on Blackboard for web assisted and online courses.

Filing and Handling of Complaints

These procedures are consistent with the [Student Academic and Grade Complaint Procedure](#) for WKU. A student who has a disagreement with a faculty member about an

academic matter must first attempt to resolve the matter through discussion with the instructor within 15 workdays after the issue has occurred or within the first 15 workdays of the first regular semester (fall; spring) following the assignment of the grade. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily between the student and the instructor, the student may specify in writing the basis for the disagreement and request a review by the Department Head of the Applied Human Sciences Department within two weeks after meeting with the faculty member. The written notification to the department head should clearly state what the student believes are the faculty member's unreasonable and/or unfair practices or procedures, and include any available documentation. The Department Head may attempt to resolve the complaint by meeting with the student and faculty member separately to mediate the issue. If the department head is unable to resolve the complaint in this way, a meeting will be arranged where the student, faculty member and the department head will be present for the discussion. Should the student remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the academic issue or grade complaint at the departmental level, the student may continue the complaint to the college level. The student should notify the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, in writing, within two weeks following the department head's recommendation. If no resolution occurs at this point, the Dean will notify the College Complaint Committee. A final appeal is possible at the University level. The full complaint procedure is available in the [undergraduate catalog](#).

The Accreditation Council for Nutrition and Dietetics Education (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. **Complaints should be submitted to ACEND only after all other options with the program and institution have been exhausted.**

ACEND's policy and procedure for submission of complaints may be found on the ACEND website at: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/public-notice-and-announcements/filing-a-complaint-with-acend>

Withdrawal and Refund of Tuition and Fees

For various reasons a student may withdraw from the University. A refund of tuition shall be made if a student officially withdraws or is dismissed from the University during the first three weeks of a regular semester. Information concerning withdrawal and refund of tuition and fees may be found at the [Office of the Bursar](#) website. Information regarding types of withdrawals is located at the [Office of the Registrar's](#) website.

WKU Student Handbook

Additional information for students can be found in the [WKU Student Handbook](#). Topics include policies regarding Academics, Information Technology, Housing and Residence Life, Alcohol and Drug Abuse and others.

Graduation and Program Completion Requirements

A Verification Statement is only granted to students who: (receipt of the Verification Statement allows a graduate to complete an internship):

1. Complete all University general education requirements.

2. Satisfactorily complete all required coursework for the Nutrition and Dietetics concentration. Students must earn a B or better in HMD 211 Human Nutrition and a C or better in all other dietetic specific courses.
3. Demonstrate attainment of core knowledge required for dietitians and nutritionists (KRDNs). Achievement of core knowledge is defined as earning a C or better on all assignments used to assess KRDNs. (See Student Performance Monitoring, Remediation and Retention below for more information).
4. Have discharged all indebtedness to Western Kentucky University.

All students must complete an Application for Graduation in the WKU Office of the Registrar after 90 credit hours are earned.

Maximum Amount of Time Allowed for Completing Program Requirements

The maximum amount of time allowed for completing program requirements in place at the time a student enrolls is based on the following University policy as delineated in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#):

“The student’s initial term of entry is identified as the student’s “catalog term”... A student will be allowed seven consecutive years from his/her catalog term to complete degree requirements. The college dean may grant an extension to this deadline...A student who drops out and re-enrolls after an absence of seven consecutive years or more will be assigned the catalog term of the readmission term.” A change in the catalog term may result in changes to the required courses of the major.

Students should be aware that some internship programs have admission requirements related to recency of education for certain courses or the bachelor’s degree. For this reason, students who have completed didactic or admission courses 5 or more years ago may be advised to retake those courses prior to applying to internships. Additional Information can be found in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Student Performance Monitoring, Remediation and Retention

Within each course for the Nutrition & Dietetics program, students will receive feedback following the completion of assignments, quizzes and exams; this feedback will occur during the course and consists of comments and grades provided by the instructor. Final course feedback will occur with receipt of the overall course grade, which may be viewed online through the TopNet system at WKU. A grade of B or better is required for HMD 211 Human Nutrition, and a grade of C or better is required for all other nutrition and dietetics specific courses.

Instructors are available to provide assistance to students who are struggling in major specific courses. Students are encouraged to seek guidance from their professor during office hours or by appointment. Discussion of study skills, clarification of assignment requirements and additional instruction on course content are provided upon request. [The Learning Center](#) provides tutoring for HMD 211 Human Nutrition, math and several supporting science courses.

Review of student progress by the academic advisor will occur in advising sessions held prior to the scheduling of courses each semester. Students who are not meeting expectations in the program will be counseled on steps to improve. If this remediation is not successful, the student will be advised to select another concentration or major as appropriate. Students should be aware that although a GPA of 3.0 is required to enter the

dietetics program at WKU, a higher GPA (e.g. 3.3 to 3.5) allows students to be more competitive for internships. Similarly, although a minimum of a C in dietetics specific courses is required for a verification statement, a grade of a C or lower in a professional course will trigger discussions on competitiveness and academic performance with the advisor.

In order to receive a verification statement, students must demonstrate attainment of core knowledge required for dietitians and nutritionists as outlined in the [KRDNs of the accreditation standards](#). Achievement is defined as earning at least a C on assignments used to assess KRDNs. Instructors will document student achievement of KRDNs assessed in their respective courses and discuss students requiring remediation with the program director. The program director retains a tracking form for each student, and will verify that each KRDN has been achieved prior to issuing the verification statement. Students who do not earn at least a C on assignments used to assess KRDNs must demonstrate achievement through another assignment or must repeat the assignment until the required grade is earned. Repeated assignments may or may not be factored into the course grade. This decision is at the discretion of the instructor.

Students in the Nutrition & Dietetics program are held to the WKU [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Academic Dishonesty](#) policies. Students who do not demonstrate professional and ethical behavior are subject to disciplinary action through the [University Conduct Process](#). In addition program faculty and the program director discuss students demonstrating unethical behavior, including academic dishonesty, so that appropriate actions can be taken.