

# Dietetic Internship Program Handbook

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**Western**  
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COLLEGE OF HEALTH  
& HUMAN SCIENCES

# DIETETIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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## INTRODUCTION

### Program Description

The Western Carolina University Dietetic Internship is a post baccalaureate, supervised practice program that qualifies graduates for the Examination for Registered Dietitians. The Dietetic Internship is available to students who have completed a baccalaureate degree and hold a valid DPD Verification Statement. The Dietetic Internship provides at least 1200 hours of supervised practice and didactic learning experiences that are in line with the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education 2008 Accreditation Standards. The dietetic internship program is designed to give students entry-level competence in dietetic practice.

Students who successfully complete the Dietetic Internship Program will accrue twelve graduate credit hours toward a Master of Science Degree in Health Sciences with an emphasis in Nutrition. The Dietetic Internship includes the following practice graduate coursework:

ND 680 Concepts and Method for Dietetic Practice	3 credits
ND 681 Practicum in Clinical Dietetics	3 credits
ND 682 Practicum in Administrative Dietetics	3 credits
ND 683 Practicum in Community Dietetics	<u>3 credits</u>
TOTAL	12 credits

### **The Mission Statement for Western Carolina University:**

*Teaching and learning constitute the central mission of Western Carolina University (WCU). The university seeks to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the highest standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines. The commitment of the community to service, research and creative activities complements the central mission and extends the benefits of its scholarship society. As a major public resource for western North Carolina, the University assists individuals and agencies in the region through the expertise of its faculty, its staff, and its students.*

### **The Mission Statement for the College of Health and Human Sciences:**

*Offer quality education for a variety of professional careers. In fulfilling this role, the College provides undergraduate and graduate programs in Cullowhee and Asheville through its constituent members: the Departments of Applied Criminology; Communication Sciences & Disorders; Physical Therapy; and Social Work; and the Schools of Health Sciences and Nursing. The College's faculty members engage in instruction, research and service with an emphasis on student-faculty involvement. A hallmark of the College, student-faculty involvement promotes creativity and critical thinking in the diverse student population. The faculty provides service to WCU students and the university at large through student advisement, service, continuing education opportunities, maintaining currency in areas of expertise, active involvement in professional organizations, and scholarly activities.*

**The Mission Statement for the School of Health Sciences:**

*The role of the School of Health Sciences is to prepare successful health professionals and informed consumers. The faculty is committed to high quality undergraduate and graduate teaching which encourages the development of critical thinking and an appreciation of the concept of life-long learning while fostering leadership, scholarship and integrity. The faculty recognizes the responsibility to extend the benefits of the departmental programs through regional service to public and private organizations, community groups, and individuals, and to participate in research efforts which support the practice of the health science professions. In these endeavors the faculty is responsive to the needs of the marketplace for competent health professionals, technical support, and up-to-date continuing education which speaks to the changing face of the health industry.*

**Mission for the Dietetic Internship:**

***The Mission of the WCU Dietetic Internship is to create and maintain a high quality learning environment that fosters critical thinking, the acquisition of knowledge, and appreciation of life-long learning that is necessary for graduates to become proficient dietetics health professionals.***

The WCU Dietetic Internship has three goals with measurable outcomes to assess goal achievement. Dietetic Internship goals are supported by the overall mission of WCU as well as the new program mission and are based upon the 2008 CADE Accreditation Standards.

**Goal One:** Prepare entry level generalist dietitians who have achieved basic competence in clinical, administrative and community dietetics.

**Outcome measures:**

- 80% of graduates seeking employment in dietetics or graduate school placement will be successfully placed within nine months of internship completion. Evidence: DI Graduate Survey Results.
- Graduates will achieve an 80% pass rate over a 5 year period for first-time takers of the RD Exam. Evidence: CDR RD Exam Test Results.
- 90% of employers will rate WCU Dietetic Internship graduates entry level competent (3) or higher on Likert scale. Evidence: Employer Survey Results.

**Goal Two:** Attract and retain well-qualified dietetic interns.

**Outcome measures:**

- 80% of interns who begin the internship will complete the program in 14 months. Evidence: Program completion rates.
- 50% or more of dietetic interns entering the program will exceed the admission criteria with a DPD GPA of 3.5. Evidence: Graduate Tracking Data.

**Goal Three:** Cultivate the pursuit of life-long learning professional development activities.

**Outcome measures:**

- 90% of graduates will report participating in continuing education activities when surveyed within 12 months of graduation. Evidence: Graduate Survey Results.
- 50% of graduates will complete graduate school within the five years of graduation. Evidence: Graduate Survey Results.
- 80% of graduates will maintain registration status five years after initial attainment of RD credential. Evidence: Graduate Survey Results.

**Accreditation Status**

In 2009, The Dietetic Internship Program was reaccredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE), the accrediting agency for the American Dietetic Association.

Contact information:

Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education  
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
1-800-877-1600 Ext. 5400

## **ORIENTATION**

### **Student Agreement**

Interns will read, sign, and comply with of WCU Student Agreement Form. The Dietetic Internship Director will maintain the Student Agreement Form in the Intern's file. The Student Agreement Form can be found in Appendix B.

The Dietetic Internship Handbook is available on the Dietetic Internship web page, <http://nutritiondietetics.wcu.edu/4680.asp>, and must be downloaded and read by the student. The intern is responsible for following the Dietetic Internship policies as presented in this document.

As noted in the WCU Record, found in the Graduate Catalog, the Dietetic Internship reserves the right to modify program policies and procedures. The Dietetic Internship Director will make every effort to notify current interns of any changes. Changes and updates to student information will be posted on the Dietetic Internship web page. Students must keep the Dietetic Internship Director informed of their current address, phone numbers, and email address.

A form acknowledging the student's receipt of the information in this Handbook is found in Appendix C. Another copy of this form will be provided for the student to sign; the signed copy will be placed in the student's Dietetic Internship file.

### **Program Orientation**

Interns meet for a three week formal orientation to the dietetic internship program. A Dietetic Internship Handbook is given to and reviewed with Interns within the first week. The complete handbook will be available to interns on WebCat , a computer blackboard internship practicums. Orientation week will include didactic learning experiences to prepare Interns for supervised practice.

### **Registration**

Dates, materials, and instructions for pre-registration are published in the *WCU Record* and the Class Schedule that is available in late October and February. Web registration is now required. Directions for Web registration are printed in the Schedule of Classes. Final grades may also be accessed by students through Blackboard. The two data items needed by graduate students to register on the Web are the student ID and the 92 number.

### **Standards of Conduct**

The university is committed to developing and maintaining the highest standards of scholarship and conduct. Therefore, all students are subject to the rules and regulations of the university. In accepting admission to Graduate School, students indicate their willingness to abide by university rules and regulations and acknowledge the right of the university to take appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion as may be deemed appropriate, for failure to abide by university rules and regulations. Rules related to student conduct and procedures for the resolution of cases may be found in the Code of Student Conduct in the Undergraduate Catalog at [Academic Regulations/Standards of Conduct](#).

### **Criminal Background Checks**

The Dietetic Internship requires criminal background checks. Students who might be affected by this policy should consider with their academic advisors as to whether they should commit time and resources to pursue Dietetic Internship placement. The Dietetic Internship Director will notify interns of criminal background check procedures. The dietetic intern is responsible for completing required paperwork and the cost of criminal background checks. Refer to [Appendix F](#) for the College of Health and Human Sciences Criminal Background Screening Policy for Students.

### **Program Costs**

The dietetic intern is responsible for paying the stated program fees by the specified dates. The intern assumes personal responsibility for living expenses throughout the entire program. Opportunities to attend professional meetings with registration fees are identified to the intern class; the intern has the option of not attending if costs are excessive.

Tuition and fees depend upon the total number of hours taken during the semester. The North Carolina legislature set tuition annually. Check the WCU website for updates.

#### **Listed below are expenses and approximate costs:**

\$3,251.50/semester	Resident Tuition for 9 graduate hours
\$8,044.00/semester	Non-Resident Tuition for 9 graduate hours
\$1,577.50/semester	University Fee for Resident and Non Resident
\$ 50.00/year	Graduate School Application Fee
\$ 60.00/year	WCU Campus Parking Permit
\$600.00/mth	Rent
\$ 75.00/mth	Utilities
\$ 200.00/mth	Transportation/Parking
\$ 200.00/mth	Food
\$ 60.00/mth	Cell phone
\$ 50.00/yr	ADA Student Membership
\$500.00/yr	Textbooks/project supplies
\$ 40.00/yr	Lab Coat
\$900.00/yr	Health Insurance (varies)
\$500.00/yr	Auto Insurance (varies)
\$ 25.00/yr	Liability Insurance
\$ 99.00/yr	Hepatitis (3 shots)
\$ 5.00/yr	TB Skin testing
\$ 10.00/yr	Flu vaccine
\$ 30.00/yr	Criminal Background Check
\$20,657.50	Total Estimated Expenses (NC Resident)
\$30,242.50	Total Estimated Expenses (Non-NC Resident)

**Financial Assistance**

Various financial sources, such as grants and loans are available to qualified graduate students in the Dietetic Internship. To become eligible, an application for financial assistance can be obtained by contacting WCU Financial Aid Office in Room 230 of the Robinson Administration Building, telephone 828-227-7290. Additional information is located on the following website:

<http://www.wcu.edu/202.asp>. Financial aid recipients are expected to comply with the guidelines established by each specific granting or loaning agency.

**Housing**

Each intern assumes the responsibility to secure housing prior to starting the program and bears the cost of housing throughout the program. It is recommended that Interns find housing within a one-hour commute of assigned supervised practice facilities. Plan housing beginning mid August and ending mid May.

**Textbooks and Supplemental Course Materials**

Interns are responsible for obtaining the required textbooks and/or electronic materials from the appropriate sales agency. Each supervised practice practicum textbooks and supplemental materials will be made available on the practicum's electronic Blackboard site by the start of the rotation.

**Student Support Services**

Dietetic interns have access to all Western Carolina University support services. Information regarding student support services can be found at <http://www.wcu.edu/49.asp>. During the first week of orientation interns will receive information and a tour of WCU's support services. These services include computer labs, information technology support, bookstore, audiovisual equipment, photocopying machines, clinical lab, fitness center, counseling services and health services.

Of particular intern support is the Hunter Library. Ann Hallyburton serves as the liaison between the Hunter Library and the Departments of Health Sciences, Physical Therapy and Nursing. Ann is responsible for maintaining the library collections for these areas. She also assists in research for faculty and students in these content areas. Ann has created instructions and educational programs for both students and faculty to simplify the search process. These instructions are posted on the Hunter Library website and have direct links to appropriate data bases.

The Hunter Library frequently updates its collections with nutrition and dietetics books in addition to multiple related allied health titles. A majority of the recommended texts for the BOC examination review, in addition to many others have been purchased and are available in Hunter Library. The library has numerous periodicals in print and on-line which pertain to nutrition, dietetics and other allied health professions.

Western Carolina University also participates in the ABC Express Network. This system links the libraries of UNC-Asheville (UNCA), Appalachian State University (ASU) and Western Carolina University. Using this system, students can request materials from either UNCA or ASU and have them delivered to Hunter Library on the campus of WCU within one to four days. Additionally, both students and faculty have access to Interlibrary Loan which allows access to materials not available at WCU, ASU or UNCA. This service typically takes up to two weeks to obtain the materials. There is no cost to the student or faculty member for either the ABC Express or Interlibrary Loan services. The library also contains an extensive amount of digital video discs, CD Rom's and video tapes which are available to students and faculty. Faculty members have the opportunity to request all material through the Faculty Liaison.

### **Physical Examination**

The dietetic intern must test negative for Tuberculosis (TB) and additional required medical tests before starting the program. If the Intern does not pass the TB skin test, a physician at their own expense must further evaluate them. Applicants with active Tuberculosis are ineligible for the internship. The Intern makes arrangements for TB tests at their own expense not more than three months before the start of the internship program, preferably early August.

The intern must present proof of MMR vaccination and chicken pox vaccination prior to program start. The intern must present proof of Hepatitis B vaccination prior to program start and/or be in the process of completing Hepatitis B series vaccinations. Proof of Hepatitis B immunity is required for all who have had vaccinations before program start. A physical health exam should occur prior to program start to document absence of communicable disease. A copy of the Dietetic Internship Health Form can be found in Appendix A.

In summary, the intern must present proof of TB skin test, MMR vaccination, Hepatitis B vaccination and physical exam to the Dietetic Internship Director before starting the dietetic internship. The lab tests, immunization records and physical exam will be shared with supervised practice facility sites that require medical information. This is in accordance with university and most hospital policies. Drug testing is required at some sites, usually at the expense of the intern. See Drug Testing Policy in Appendix G.

### **Medical Insurance**

The intern is required to carry medical insurance throughout dietetic internship program. Acquiring and maintaining insurance is the responsibility of the intern. The intern must submit a copy of medical insurance coverage to the Dietetic Internship Director on the first day of the program. Should the Intern be injured or ill at WCU or at a supervised practice facility rotation, the intern's medical coverage would take effect to cover costs.

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

It is mandatory that each intern carry Professional Liability Insurance throughout the program. Professional Liability Insurance provides malpractice coverage for

interns during the program rotations and didactics trainings. The cost of the coverage is the responsibility of the intern. Professional Liability Insurance will be purchased during orientation week through the School of Health Sciences.

### **Dress Code**

To promote a professional image, the intern will wear professional attire at clinical and community rotations and while in attendance of professional meetings. When in a food service or production areas the intern will abide by the uniform dress code for kitchen staff, or as otherwise directed by preceptor. Jeans are not appropriate professional attire. Interns who do not follow facility guidelines for dress code will be sent home and counted absent. A general rule of thumb is to dress like one's preceptor. Identification badges should be worn during all rotations. Jewelry should be conservative and in compliance with rotation facility dress code. Hair should be styled in a conservative manner. Most rotation sites do not allow sandals, open toed shoes, or tennis shoes. Cologne or perfume is usually not allowed. Clinical rotations will require a lab coat. Professional dress with specific examples will be discussed in detail during dietetic internship orientation.

### **Transportation**

The dietetic intern must provide his/her own transportation throughout the program to supervised practice and didactic class sites and professional meetings. The interns must carry automobile liability insurance throughout the program. On the first day of dietetic internship the intern must submit proof of automobile liability insurance to the Dietetic Internship Director. The intern is responsible for all liability and safety in travel to and from assigned facilities. While at WCU the intern shall park at assigned parking spaces. Prior to the beginning of the internship the intern is informed of WCU parking arrangements and parking lots. Most supervised practice facilities provide free parking. Carry a local map and plan routes to facilities before starting out to prevent getting lost or being late.

### **ADA Membership**

The dietetic intern is required to join the American Dietetic Association and the North Carolina Dietetic Association as a student member. The fees associated with membership are the responsibility of the intern. Meeting dates and locations will be shared on the internship program calendar or by e-mail as these facts are known. Interns are encouraged to attend as many meetings as possible and are required to attend a minimum of two professional meetings during the program year. After each attended meeting, the intern is required to complete and turn in a Professional Meeting Summary that includes a brief abstract of the material covered by the speaker. Refer to Appendix D for Professional Meeting Summary form.

### **Equal Opportunity**

Western Carolina University is an equal opportunity institution with respect to both education and employment. The university does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or handicap in admission or

access to, or treatment or employment in, its program and activities as required by federal (Title VI, Title IX, Section 504) and state laws and regulations. Although this policy is intended for paid employees, the WCU Dietetic Internship is also committed to upholding all federal regulations regarding equal opportunity and fair treatment.

### **Fair Labor Standards**

The training given to the dietetic intern is for the benefit of the intern. He/she does not displace regular employees. The intern works under the close supervision of the site preceptor. The intern is aware that he/she is not entitled to wages for the time spent in training nor to a job at the conclusion of the program.

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

Western Carolina University, as a community of scholarship, is also a community of honor. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students work together to achieve the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at WCU because it threatens the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on knowledge and integrity.

Honesty and integrity are fundamental values for the dietetics profession and the University. Students will not lie, steal, or cheat in their academic endeavors, nor will the student tolerate the actions of those who do. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the consequences of violating academic honesty policies and the impact such violations can have on their standing in the Dietetic Internship Program, the University, and in their careers.

Dietetic interns are held to the University's Academic Honesty Policy, on the web in [Academic Integrity Policy](#). To maintain the public's trust in dietitians, dishonesty will not be tolerated. Acts of academic dishonesty may result in penalties ranging from a grade of zero on the paper/project/test, or a "U" in a supervised practicum course, to failure of the entire course and immediate dismissal from the program. Consequences will be determined by the Dietetic Internship Director. Circumstances of the act of academic dishonesty and consequent penalties will be documented in the student's academic file and reported to the School Director, Dean, and the School of Health and Human Sciences Student Affairs Committee in accordance with WCU policy. Students may appeal the Dietetic Internship Director's decision through the school or graduate school appeals process.

### ***Examples of academic dishonesty:***

- Cheating: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- Fabrication: intentional falsification or invention of information or citation in any academic exercise.
- Plagiarism\*: representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise.

- Facilitation of academic dishonesty: intentionally or knowingly helping or tempting someone else to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as knowingly allowing another to copy information during an examination or other academic exercise, or being aware of academic dishonesty by another student and not reporting to the Instructor of Record.

\*Specific guidelines about avoiding plagiarism are available at:

<http://www.wcu.edu/11861.asp>

*Congruent with The Record, Graduate Catalog*

*For specific information on procedures for cases involving allegations of academic dishonesty see WCU Student Handbook.*

### **Prior Assessed Learning**

WCU's Dietetic Internship Program participates in the Prior Assessed Learning (PAL) program recognized by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education. PAL is designed to grant internship credit in specific rotations of the internship based on the qualified applicant's previous life experiences including work, volunteer, achievement, and graduate education. Interns may be granted prior learning from other programs (i.e., dietetic technician training, culinary technology, hotel and tourism) or extensive work experience in practice (i.e. food service management, WIC nutritionist, dietetic technician). Coursework in a DPD (didactic program in dietetics) undergraduate dietetics program is excluded from PAL. Refer to Appendix H for WCU DI Program Prior Assessed Learning Policy and Procedures.

## **TIME AND ATTENDANCE**

### **Supervised Practice Schedule**

The Dietetic Internship Director will coordinate interns rotation schedule for supervised practice and provide the schedule by the first day of the program. Placement for supervised practice is influenced by a variety of factors such as consideration of students' learning needs, availability of appropriate facilities, and availability of preceptors. Interns may submit written requests for specific facilities and preceptors. These requests must be submitted to the Dietetic Internship Director by midterm of the semester preceding the scheduled supervised practice rotation. Attempts are made by the Dietetic Internship Director to coordinate rotation placements within a feasible commuting distance. Changes in the schedule may be necessary due to staff injury, turnover, or other unforeseen situations. If the intern needs to have his/her schedule changed, the Dietetic Internship Director must be made aware of such change with at least two weeks notice. For interns, emergency situations are an exception. It is the intern's responsibility to contact the site preceptor one week before their scheduled rotation to determine start time and initial meeting location. The primary preceptor determines the intern's schedule. Interns are to promptly report at scheduled times to all sites. Depending on the rotation, shifts may be early or late and could require week-end or evening hours. Generally rotations for supervised practice are eight hour days Monday through Friday to provide a forty hour week and allow for a thirty minute lunch. Each rotation lasts nine weeks.

### **Didactic Training Schedule**

Didactic experiences are scheduled before the start of internship program. If it is determined that additional didactic experiences are needed, interns are informed of the didactic class at least four weeks in advance of the date. Some didactic classes will be taught by dietetic professionals with specialty practice areas. Courtesy is expected which involves respectful listening and turning off cell phones. Refrain from eating during class; eating can occur during scheduled breaks. The intern is responsible for preparing for class, arriving on time and bringing appropriate books. Any intern unable to attend class is to immediately notify the Dietetic Internship Director of the nature of the absence. If there is an absence, the intern is expected to demonstrate how the competences from the class will be met; i.e., through a written paper or demonstration to the satisfaction of the Dietetic Internship Director. Following every class, each intern is to complete a Didactic Class Evaluation Form and return it to the Dietetic Internship Director. A copy of the Didactic Class Evaluation Form can be found in Appendix E.

### **Attendance**

Interns are expected to report to each supervised practice day and didactic class as scheduled. Attendance means arriving on time and staying for the duration of all supervised practice and didactic learning experiences. Supervised practice rotations are forty hours a week. Interns' daily record supervised practice hours and didactic hours. Internship hours are totaled and recorded the Dietetic Internship Weekly Competency Log, which the site preceptor reviews and signs.

Unexcused absences are not tolerated. Any unexcused absence from scheduled rotations is subject to disciplinary action. A warning letter will be sent to the intern when this policy is violated. An intern failing to attend a supervised practice or didactic experience without proper notification a second time may be dismissed from the program. Project or study time should not occur during supervised practice experiences unless the site preceptor has given prior approval.

### **Punctuality**

The intern is expected to be ready for work at the scheduled starting time for supervised practice or didactic experience. Lateness will not be tolerated. If the intern expects to be late, he/she should call the preceptor to inform him/her of lateness and expected time of arrival. Since late arrival is disruptive to a didactic class, the Dietetic Internship Director has the option to exclude the intern from the learning activity. Exclusion from class/clinical learning activity due to tardiness results in absence and will be treated as such. Punctuality is monitored by site preceptors and reflected on Intern Evaluations. The Dietetic Internship Director counsels the intern, documents the lateness and places the information in the intern's file.

### **Absence Due to Illness or Injury**

The intern is allowed up to four excused absences due to illness or injury. An absence of three or more consecutive days will require a note from the physician. Such documentation may be required for shorter periods of absence as determined by the Dietetic Internship Director. At the discretion of the Dietetic Internship Director, supervised practice hours lost to sick or injury may need to be made up. For the fifth and subsequent absences the intern will receive verbal counseling for the absence and that time will be made up at the discretion of the Dietetic Internship Director. If the intern is out due to illness or injury, he/she should notify the site preceptor and Dietetic Internship Director for each day of absence. The illness or injury is documented and placed in the intern's file. The intern records their absence on the Dietetic Internship Weekly Competency Log. If illness, injury or pregnancy interrupts a rotation for a definite period of time, the Dietetic Internship Director will negotiate an appropriate leave for the intern. This leave must not extend past a two year limit and must not interfere with rotation schedules of other interns.

### **Absence for Bereavement**

The intern is excused for three supervised practice days when there is a death of his/her immediate family (spouse, child, brother, sister, mother, father, grandparent, grandchild, stepchild, or spouses parent). The Dietetic Internship Director reserves the right to request valid proof of death and relationship of immediate family member. Any request for additional days of absence is approved by the Dietetic Internship Director as Absences for Personal Reasons. The intern is to immediately contact the site preceptor and Dietetic Internship Director when there is a death of an immediate family member.

**Absence for Personal Reasons**

There are two days available to the intern for an excused absence for reasons other than illness or the death of a family member. Interns can request an absence to be excused due to personal reasons. Approval is left to the discretion of the Dietetic Internship Director. If the requested excused absence is greater than two days, the intern is required to make up the lost internship time, at the discretion of the Dietetic Internship Director.

**Vacation**

During the Dietetic Internship interns are provided with three weeks of vacation. Vacation will occur during December, the first week of January, and during Western Carolina University's scheduled Fall Break that occurs in October. At the beginning of the program, the Dietetic Internship Director informs interns of the scheduled weeks of vacation and holidays.

**Holidays**

The intern is entitled to the following holidays, most to be observed on the actual day in which the holiday falls: Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day and the day following Thanksgiving. Interns might be assigned to work no more than one holiday. If so, the intern will be scheduled off on another day. The alternate holiday will be scheduled within thirty days of the missed actual holiday. The Dietetic Internship Director will inform the intern if he/she is scheduled to work the observed holiday.

**Inclement Weather**

Each intern is expected to attend rotations at facilities as scheduled. In the rare event of inclement weather (e.g. snow or ice), the Dietetic Internship Director will determine the status of the didactic class day and will email this information to each intern. The Internship Director will follow Western Carolina University's decision during times of inclement weather. In supervised practice settings, each intern is considered a non-essential employee and should attend the rotation facility if it is "open for business" for non-essential employees unless the primary site preceptor advises the intern differently.

## **PERFORMANCE**

### **Intern Evaluations**

The dietetic intern will be given verbal and written evaluation on a regular, ongoing basis throughout the program. It is the intern's responsibility to be familiar with all evaluation forms and guidelines for the evaluation form so that he/she is aware of the criteria and timing for each evaluation. Evaluations are to be completed by the specified dates. The intern is evaluated by the site preceptor every three weeks during each rotation and at the conclusion of the rotation. The site preceptor completes the Intern Evaluation Form and discusses the evaluation with the student. The intern, preceptor and Dietetic Internship Director sign the evaluation form. The Dietetic Internship Director provides the appropriate evaluation forms to the preceptor, specifies the dates for evaluation, reviews completed evaluations, and maintains all evaluations in the Intern's file. The Dietetic Intern completes Internship Mid-Point Self Assessment in December and Internship Completion Self Assessment in May. For program feedback, Interns complete an evaluation following each rotation and didactic experience. An exit interview occurs between the intern and Dietetic Internship Director at the end of the internship.

### **Access to Personal Files**

The intern has access, upon request, to his/her Dietetic Internship file at all times. The intern asks and schedules a time to meet with Dietetic Internship Director to inspect their Dietetic Internship file. The Dietetic Internship Director sits with the intern while he/she reviews file. The Dietetic Intern's File is kept in the Nutrition Dietetics Program in Moore Hall.

### **Protection of Privacy**

The Intern's Dietetic Internship file is kept locked in file cabinet in the Dietetic Internship Director's office. All information in the intern's file is kept private except for projects the intern completed. Preceptors may refer to an intern's project as requested. No one has direct access to the files except the Dietetic Internship Director.

### **Graduation Requirements**

The intern must meet graduation requirements as stated in the Agreement Form between the Intern and the College of Health and Human Sciences (see Appendix B). The intern must sign and date the agreement proceeding internship start date. If the intern refuses to sign the Agreement Form he/she cannot begin the program. The intern must complete the required supervised practice hours and demonstrate satisfactory performance and competence throughout the program rotations as evaluated by site preceptors and Dietetic Internship Director. The intern must complete all program and self assessments as well as exit interview with the Dietetic Internship Director. The intern must demonstrate no misconduct, academic or non-academic, and must perform ethically in accordance with the values of the American Dietetic Association and Code of Ethics of the Commission on Dietetic Registration. The intern will receive a Dietetic Internship Verification Statement, following successful completion of the dietetic internship.

**Grievance**

The Intern has the right to file a grievance if he/she feels that he/she has not been treated fairly. The following procedure is designed to provide a clear course of action to Intern in resolving grievances:

1. Immediately after the unsatisfactory experience, the Intern should discuss the problem with the site preceptor. If this discussion fails to resolve the problem proceed to step 2.
2. Discuss the grievance with the Dietetic Internship Director. Complete a grievance report that describes in detail (dates, times, involved parties) the problem encountered. Identify actions taken. If no resolution proceed to step 3.
3. The Dietetic Internship Director will arrange a conference with the intern and preceptor will discuss the problem. Following the conference, the Dietetic Internship Director will determine resolution of the problem.

**Dismissal for Improper Conduct**

The Dietetic Internship Director has an academic, legal, and ethical responsibility to protect members of the public and of the health care community from unsafe or unprofessional conduct. It is within this context that students can be academically sanctioned, disciplined, or dismissed from the Dietetic Internship. The intern is subject to disciplinary counseling by any preceptor at any time during the program when the intern does not abide by the Dietetic Internship Program or Western Carolina University policies, procedures, or code of conduct. See WCU student code of conduct listed on website. The specific disciplinary action is based upon which rule of conduct was violated and whether or not previous warnings were given for same behavior. One serious offense is cause for immediate termination. The site preceptor discusses the misconduct with the intern within two scheduled working days. The preceptor documents each disciplinary discussion and a copy is given to the Dietetic Internship Director. All written disciplinaries are maintained in the intern's file. After three disciplinaries, the Dietetic Internship Director meets with the intern to discuss the problem(s). The Dietetic Internship Director and School Director determine if the disciplinaries warrant terminating the intern from the program. After each subsequent disciplinary, the Dietetic Internship Director and School Director meet to determine whether the intern should be terminated from the program. The Dietetic Internship Director documents each meeting with the intern and the final results of the meeting. All documentation is kept in the Intern's file.

Improper Conduct is Defined As:

1. An act or behavior that violates The American Dietetic Association and its Commission on Dietetic Registration Code of Ethics. This code, entitled the *Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics* is available online at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)
2. An act or behavior which threatens, or has the potential to threaten, the physical, emotional, mental, or environmental safety of the patient/client, family member, another student, faculty member, preceptor, other health care provider, or any other person.

3. An act or behavior which constitutes a practice a student is not prepared or authorized to perform on any other person at the time of the incident.

Dietetic interns may be dismissed from the program for unprofessional or unsafe behavior including:

- Unsafe practice
- Clinical error or poor clinical judgment affecting patient safety
- Inability to cooperate with preceptors, peers, or hospital staff
- Habitual tardiness or absenteeism
- Performing as an RD outside the confines of the Dietetic Internship Program
- Consistent lack of preparation for supervised practice practicum and didactic classes
- Evidence of drug or alcohol abuse
- Falsification of records

Investigation and Evaluation of Improper Conduct:

1. When an incident occurs which a supervised practice preceptor believes may constitute improper conduct, he/she shall notify the intern promptly and instruct the intern to immediately leave the practice setting; a determination will be made by preceptor if the student is safe to drive himself/herself, or if alternate transportation is needed.
2. It is the preceptor's responsibility to make the recommendation for action relative to the student's conduct. The Dietetic Internship Director handles the fact finding, the determination of the degree of seriousness of the student's conduct, and the resulting discipline, if any.
3. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the School of Health and Human Science's deliberation, he/she may appeal in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedures.

Dietetic interns must adhere to the Western Carolina University Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, and policies on use of illegal drugs.

Academic Honesty Policy: [Academic Integrity Policy](#)

University Policy #38: <http://www.wcu.edu/chancellor/policies/Alphabetical.html>

Western Carolina University Graduate Catalog: [Graduate Catalog](#)

### **Withdrawal**

The intern may withdraw from the program at any time. To withdraw, the intern writes a letter to the Dietetic Internship Director describing the reason for withdrawal. The Dietetic Internship Director meets with the intern to discuss his/her decision. After the discussion, if the intern decides to remain in the program, the intern resumes his/her rotation schedule. If withdrawal is the decision, withdrawal is immediate. The intern and Dietetic Internship Director sign and date the withdrawal letter. The letter is filed in the intern's file. The intern cannot return to the program after withdrawal. Refund of tuition and fees is inline with the university's policy that is found in the WCU Graduate Catalog on

the website. To withdraw from the university (i.e. cease to attend all courses), a student must complete a withdrawal form from the One Stop Office. If an emergency prevents a student from completing the withdrawal process before leaving the campus, the student should call, write, or arrange for a relative to contact the One Stop Office at 828-227-7170.

Any time a student is forced to withdraw from the university during a term for mental health, medical, legal, or administrative reasons, which are verified in writing. A grade of "W" will be assigned in all courses in which the student is registered. If a student withdraws from the university for other than mental health, medical, legal, or administrative reasons after one-half of the total class time has elapsed, an F, W, I, or IP grade will be assigned by the instructor according to the following guidelines.

1. A "W" grade will be assigned if the student is passing or if the student's progress has not been evaluated.
2. An "I" or "IP" grade will be assigned if the instructor agrees that there is a reasonable prospect that the work can be made up and agrees to allow the student to do so.
3. An "F" grade will be assigned if the student is failing.

Current policies and procedures pertaining to grades, indebtedness, and refunds are applicable upon withdrawal from the university. A student who withdraws from the university either during or at the end of a term for any reason is responsible for clearing any indebtedness to Residential Living, bookstore, financial aid office, controller's office, library, university police department, academic departments, and health services.

### **Chart Notes**

All medical chart notes written by an Intern must be cosigned by the site preceptor on the same day that the note is written. At the beginning of the program all chart notes are written on a separate sheet of paper. The preceptor informs the Intern when he/she can place notes directly in the medical record. Unless otherwise instructed by site preceptor, the intern signs chart note as follows: First Initial. Last Name, Dietetic Intern

The Intern records a list of all patients that he/she has seen and daily forwards the list to his/her site preceptor. The site preceptor is responsible for reviewing and countersigning all Intern notes.

### **Written Assignments**

All written assignments must be completed orderly, neatly, accurately and must be turned in by the specified date. All typed assignments should be spell and grammar checked. All projects must be typed, unless otherwise stated. Interns are expected to comply with Western Carolina University's Code of Academic Honesty for all assignments. The site preceptor and Dietetic Internship Director must approval any request for an extension of time on a project.

**E-mail Communications**

All E-mail communications submitted to the Dietetic Internship Director and preceptors should spell checked before sending. This is to assist in assuring that initial and subsequent impressions are positive. Interns are required to read and respond to their E-Mail messages on a regular basis. Complete details regarding the appropriate use of the University's Electronic Mail System is at the following website: <http://www.wcu.edu/chancellor/index/UniversityPolicy/policy93.htm>

**Continuing Education**

Dietetic interns are encouraged to attend North Carolina Dietetic Association meetings, workshops, and other dietetic profession meetings as available. The Dietetic Internship Director posts available conferences, workshops and trainings on WebCat or forwards information to Interns by e-mail. Interns wishing to attend a conference write a request to the Dietetic Internship Director stating the conference, date, time and location. The Dietetic Internship Director responds in writing if approval is granted or denied. The intern pays the fees for conference/workshop. Attendance at a conference, meeting or workshop is part of supervised experience.

**Program Evaluation**

The Dietetic Internship program is evaluated by first year graduates, by employers of first year graduates, by current interns and preceptors and by the Advisory Board. The current Interns have an opportunity to evaluate the program after each rotation, each didactic class, and at the end of the internship. When needed, additions, revisions and deletions in the program are made during the internship to enhance the Intern's learning and program experience. The Dietetic Internship Director distributes, collects and reviews all evaluation forms. Evaluation forms are assessed and information summarized and forward to the Advisory Board. Feedback is obtained and appropriate changes made in the program.

**Opportunity for Filing Complaints with the Commission on Accreditation of Dietetics Educations (CADE)**

The Commission on Accreditation of Dietetics Educations (CADE) will review complaints that relate to a Dietetic Internship program's compliance with accreditation standards. CADE is interested in the sustained quality of continued improvement of dietetics education programs, but does not intervene on behalf of individuals in matters of admission, appointment, promotion, or dismissal of faculty, staff, or students. A copy of the accreditation standards and/or CADE's policy and procedure for submission of complaints may be obtained by contacting the staff at the:

Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education  
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
1-800-877-1600 Ext. 5400

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Dietetic Intern Roles and Responsibilities**

The dietetic intern will acquire the skills and knowledge to function as an entry-level dietitian or manager in all areas of dietetics. Failure to follow these rules might result in termination from the program.

- Present himself/herself in a professional manner and appearance at all times.
- Represent Western Carolina University in an appropriate manner and appearance when visiting affiliations, class days and field observations.
- Be punctual and available throughout the rotation.
- Complete objectives, learning experiences, reading assignments, and projects by due dates.
- Be prepared for each rotation by reading required texts and articles and by completing worksheets prior to or during each rotation.
- Follow hospital, department, and program policies and procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality of all information discussed within the hospital and department.
- Ask for the preceptor's approval to leave his/her area of responsibility. Communicate to the instructor when attending meeting or conferences out of the building.
- Inform the preceptor of any change in his/her schedule in a timely manner. Accept any change in the preceptor's schedule that may arise.
- Maintain respect for positions of authority.
- Function as a team player.
- Seek guidance when needed.
- Research and look up information as needed.
- Accept constructive criticism.
- Completely accept responsibility for all actions.
- Maintain a positive and hard-working attitude.
- Maintain open and frequent communication with staff.
- Attend all required conferences, meetings, and classes.
- Maintain Dietetic Internship Portfolio files.

### **Dietetic Internship Preceptor Roles and Responsibilities**

The preceptor is to teach the intern the skills and knowledge required to function as an entry-level dietitian or manager in the preceptor's area of specialty.

- Orient the intern to the facilities, objectives, learning experiences and due dates.
- Review the schedule and competencies of the rotation with the intern.
- Complete orientation to unit checklist on the first day of the rotation with the Intern.
- Inform other employees of the dates when the Intern will be in his/her area.
- Meet with the Intern at least once each week to discuss projects/concerns.
- Correct, return, and review written projects within one week after receiving them from the intern.

- Complete appropriate Intern evaluation forms by the last day of the rotation. Any deviation from this rule must be pre-approved by the Internship Director.
- Provide immediate positive feedback and constructive criticism throughout the rotation to the intern.
- Give guidance throughout the rotation and especially with written projects to the intern.
- Act as a resource person when the intern has questions.
- Refer the intern to appropriate resources when needed.
- Be aware of internship policies and procedures.
- Enforce policies and procedures when needed.
- Discipline the intern as needed.
- Act as a mentor and function as a team player.
- Serve as a role model at all times.
- Empower Intern to an interdependent, but autonomous level of function.
- Review, in a timely manner, the intern's progress with the Internship Director at the midpoint and end of the rotation.
- Provide constructive feedback on the Program Evaluation Form.

### **Dietetic Internship Director Roles and Responsibilities**

The Dietetic Internship Director is responsible for planning, administration and evaluation of Western Carolina University's Dietetic Internship Program.

- Develop and update recruitment and application information for prospective students.
- Provide program information and meet with prospective students.
- Orient the intern to the program.
- Organize the rotations throughout the year.
- Coordinate with the preceptor the objectives, learning experiences and projects for the intern for that rotation.
- Monitor and evaluate the intern's progress in each rotation throughout the year.
- Provide ongoing support and advice for all interns during their placement. Remain in constant communication with the interns via telephone, email, scheduled site visits, and facilitates meetings with all current interns to provide further support, guidance, counseling, and advice.
- Develop the interns' rotation schedules.
- Plan and schedule didactic class days.
- Maintain records pertaining to the maintenance of the program including student complaints and resolutions.
- Serve as a role model and mentor to the intern.
- Act as a liaison between the preceptor and intern as needed.
- Serve as an advocate for the intern when appropriate and justified.
- Enforce policies and procedures.
- Direct the selection and procession of new dietetic interns.
- Enforce the role and responsibilities of both the intern and the preceptor.
- Recruit adequate and appropriate preceptors.

- Facilitate the negotiation of all contacts between the program and the supervised practice sites.
- Recruit members of the Dietetic Internship Advisory Board.
- Complete all official forms, studies, reports, RD exam registration, etc., necessary for maintenance of DI program.
- Conduct continuous internal and external program evaluations.
- Develop new and/or modify current curriculum based on the ongoing achievement of student learning outcomes, expected competence of the students, program goals, and changes impacting dietetic practice.
- Review the progress of the DI and program. Decide on future goals and implementation plans.

# Western Carolina University Dietetic Internship Program

## **HEALTH EXAMINATION RESULTS:**

To Whom It May Concern: \_\_\_\_\_ had a PPD skin test for TB on \_\_\_\_\_ and the results were positive/negative. PPD was placed on RIGHT/LEFT arm.

If test was positive, a chest X-ray showed the following results: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hepatitis B Series: Dates of administration

\_\_\_\_\_

Attach a copy of results from previous immunizations with names and dates given.

## **ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES: Dietetics Program**

### **Environmental Factors:**

- Exposure to chemical compounds, slippery floor conditions, possible hazardous conditions en route to affiliations and class days.
- Exposure to possible hazards of microwaves, various pieces of kitchen equipment (steam kettles, ovens, mixers, slicers) while in foodservice operations.
- Exposure to loud noises of trayline or kitchen equipment.
- Work in varied work sites of the track facilities.
- Exposure to excessive humidity and dampness in various kitchen or office areas.
- Exposure to excessively dry or cold areas (kitchen, offices, dock areas).
- Limited work space for work and for personal property in some work areas.
- Work independently of others as well as in teams.
- Many variations in expected work hours, depending on assignment.
- Exposure to sick and dying patients and infectious illnesses during clinical and community rotations.
- Exposure to potentially violent patients or employees in some rotations.
- Possibility of walking in early morning or late evening hours depending on rotations.

### **Functional/Physical Factors:**

- Light to heavy lifting - up to 50 lbs. with resistance, in some rotations and assignments (office, kitchen).
- Reaching above shoulders and stretching to reach storage shelves to retrieve materials and supplies.

- Bending to check trays and to complete sanitation inspections.
- Simple grasping.
- Fine manipulation (computers, typewriters, calculators).
- Use of both hands required or compensated by acceptable prosthesis (especially lifting, working in kitchen areas).
- Walking - about 1-2 hours/day
- Standing - about 3 hours/day
- Sitting - about 3-4 hours/day
- Both legs required unless intern is capable of functioning in the kitchen, on patient units and in the community with minimal assistance.
- Keen visual acuity to distinguish numbers, doctors' orders in charts, nourishment and patient cardexes, recipes, spreadsheets, and for focusing on computer screens.
- Ability to distinguish colors and shades of color (for teaching, for use of various menus and tools).
- Normal or corrected hearing.
- Good sense of direction for fast and efficient movement through facilities; use of stairs often required.

**Motor Capability:**

- Move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces
- Squat, crawl, bend/stoop, reach above shoulder level, use standing balance, and climb stairs.
- Use hands repetitively; use manual dexterity.
- Travel to and from academic and clinical sites.

**Sensory Capability:**

- Coordinate verbal and manual instruction.
- Comfortable working in close physical proximity to patient

Attach current physical examination results dated within the past 6 months; and original physician signature is required.

From this physical examination, based on my assessment of this individual's physical and emotional health on \_\_\_\_\_, profession in a clinical or a foodservice setting:  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If no, please explain:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ MD, PA, or CRNP

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Successful completion of physical examination is required before the first day of the program.*

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES  
STUDENT AGREEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned student, enrolled in WCU's  
(print name)

\_\_\_\_\_ program, hereby understand and agree to the following conditions during my clinical education at the assigned FACILITY(S):

I understand my participation in this program in which I will receive structured clinical experience is contingent upon my satisfactory performance and cooperation with the FACILITY staff, and if at any time I do not abide by the below conditions, I understand that I may be removed from the program.

I certify that I am covered by professional liability insurance and understand that I must provide proof of such coverage to the DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM .

I understand my clinical performance as it relates to program objectives will be evaluated on a regular basis by designated faculty and/or FACILITY representatives and that I may be dismissed if my performance is not satisfactory.

I understand that the records, documents, and all patient information of the FACILITY are legally confidential under a variety of laws including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191. I will not divulge any personal and/or medical and/or business information concerning any person and/or record which I encounter at any FACILITY. If requested by the FACILITY, I agree to sign FACILITY'S Confidentiality Statement and Conflict of Interest Statement prior to my participation at the FACILITY.

I understand that I am responsible for my transportation to and from the FACILITY and on any reasonable special clinical assignment.

I have reviewed a copy of the Program Exposure Control Plan, which outlines the PROGRAM's requirements regarding vaccinations, precautions, and education concerning blood-borne pathogens, and my responsibilities and options should an exposure occur.

I am in compliance with North Carolina General Statute 130A-155.1 and North Carolina Immunization Rules and have provided the University with evidence of the following current immunizations: Diphtheria, Pertussis-Tetanus or Tetanus-Diphtheria; measles (rubeola), mumps; and rubella (MMR is the preferred vaccine); if required by the clinical FACILITY, a varicella zoster vaccine; and a tuberculin skin test (PPD) or a chest X-ray if skin test is positive.

I understand that I am responsible for following all behavioral standards and administrative policies and completing all requirements of the FACILITY, including satisfactorily completing and/or providing a record of immunization, health care (medical) insurance, health and/or other informational forms; criminal background check(s); and drug screening(s) as required by the FACILITY. I understand that I am responsible for any and all costs associated with the requirements of each FACILITY. Moreover I understand that if a FACILITY refuses me placement based on results of FACILITY required criminal background check(s) and/or drug screening(s) result(s), I may be removed from the PROGRAM.

I understand that I am responsible for adhering to the dress code of the FACILITY and for any necessary expense in attaining appropriate uniforms.

I understand that I am not an employee of the FACILITY.

I understand that I am responsible for reporting to the designated individual (faculty or FACILITY liaison) at the FACILITY on time during my scheduled assignment, and that I must notify the designated individual of any deviation from my scheduled arrival/departure times. I understand that the FACILITY and faculty liaison will, upon prior agreement, permit me Facility and University holidays where possible in meeting educational objectives.

I acknowledge that I understand the above conditions of acceptance and agree to perform accordingly.

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Signature

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Date

**Western Carolina University  
Dietetic Internship Program**

**Dietetic Internship Handbook Statement**

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read and familiarized myself with the 2009 edition of the Western Carolina University Dietetic Internship Program Handbook.

Additionally, I understand the contents of this document and how the policies and procedures of Western Carolina University's Dietetic Internship Program will impact my progress in the program.

I also understand that the policies and procedures established in future editions of the Dietetic Internship Handbook supercede all previous policies and procedures of the Dietetic Internship Program.

I am also aware that the most current edition of the Western Carolina University Dietetic Internship Handbook can be found on the Western Carolina University Dietetic Internship Program web site.

Finally, I have spoken with the Director of the Dietetic Internship to discuss any questions or concerns I have regarding the contents of the 2009 Dietetic Internship Program Handbook.

Signature of Intern \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

## **Professional Meeting Summary**

Title:

Speaker:

Date:

Provide a brief abstract of the material covered by the speaker.

**Western Carolina University  
Dietetic Internship Didactic Class Evaluation**

<b>Instructor(s):</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		
<b>Topic(s)</b>		

**Scoring:** Strongly Agree [5] >> Agree [4] >> Neutral [3] >> Disagree [2] >> Strongly Disagree [1]

**Organization**

The Instructor:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Was well prepared for class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provided an overview or purpose
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presented materials in a logical sequence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paced lesson appropriately

**Communication**

The Instructor:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Explained clearly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listened to intern questions & comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Effectively responded to questions

**Content**

The Instructor:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Presented beneficial subject matter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provided adequate time to cover subject matter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incorporated recent developments, ideas, or approaches to the subject

**Subject Matter**

<input type="checkbox"/>	The depth and breadth of the material was appropriate for the competency statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	The subject matter was intellectually rigorous
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intern gained competence in subject matter

**Instructor-Intern Interaction**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Encouraged intern participation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintained intern attention
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interacted with interns in a way conducive to learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shows interest in interns and their learning

What suggestions do you have for improving upon this didactic class?

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Further Comments:

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**WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING POLICY for STUDENTS**

**Policy Statement**

Western Carolina University and the College of Health and Human Sciences is committed to the safety of the campus community and the agencies, clients, and patients we serve. All students who are formally accepted into undergraduate or graduate programs that require clinical internships\* in the College of Health and Human Sciences must participate in a criminal background screening prior to participating in a clinical placement. (Specific due dates will be included in the students' admissions letters) Students who do not comply with the deadline may have to delay their clinical placement and/or delay their progression within the program. Students should be advised that criminal background screening is also required for many health care provider licensures.

\* Exceptions (do not require clinical internships):

Criminal Justice

Emergency and Disaster Management

Online EMC program

Online Health Information and  
Administration

Environmental Health

Undergraduate Nutrition and Dietetics

**Procedures:**

1. Criminal background investigation will be performed, at the student's expense, by a third party vendor under contract with UNC/WCU (e.g., Certiphi), with the results of the investigation sent to the Dean's Office for review and judgment in accordance with applicable College policies and procedures.
2. Once students have been admitted to a program, the department head or clinical coordinator will submit their names and the deadline for when the CBC must be completed to the Dean's Administrative Assistant (DAA). The DAA in the College of Health and Human Sciences will perform a preliminary investigation of students' criminal background check (CBC) prior to clinical placement.
3. The DAA will notify the School Director or Department Head if students have "passed" the CBC (no criminal activity found) or if the student's CBC needs review (indicating criminal activity found). No other information will be provided to the Director or Department Head related to the CBC.
4. For students who need review, the DAA will notify the Dean and the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean will convene the CBC review committee, consisting of three clinical coordinators from the College of Health and Human Sciences, who will then review the case. The Associate Dean will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee. A representative who represents the major or discipline of the student(s) who need CBC review will also be consulted.
5. The CBC Review Committee will review the student's CBC for the following felonies. A conviction or plea of guilty or no contest to any of the **felonies** noted below will

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**disqualify** the student from participating in a clinical learning experience in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

- a. Homicide
  - b. Kidnapping and abduction
  - c. Assaults with weapons or inflicting serious injury
  - d. Rape or other sex offense
  - e. Robbery or larceny
  - f. Abuse, neglect or exploitation of children, disabled adults or elder adults
6. Other types of felony or misdemeanor convictions, (with the exception of one time minor traffic violations) including sale, possession, distribution or transfer of controlled substances, or questionable criminal histories will be reviewed by the Academic Action Committee in accordance with the following criteria:
- a. Would the student pose a threat to the health and safety of the university community and any patient or client?
  - b. What were the:
    - 1) The dates, locations, and nature of the conduct/crime?
    - 2) Characteristics of the victim(s)?
    - 3) Frequency of convictions or pleas?
    - 4) Opinions of law enforcement officials, district attorney?
  - c. In addition, is/are there:
    - 5) Any pending charges?
    - 6) Evidence of successful rehabilitation?
    - 7) Evidence of remorse/accountability?
    - 8) Positive references?
    - 9) Evidence of the accuracy and truthfulness of the information submitted?
7. Based on the above criteria, a recommendation by the Academic Action Committee will be submitted to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences. The Dean may accept the recommendation of the Committee or make an alternative decision. The decision of the Dean will be final. Once the decision is made, the Dean's office will notify the School Director or Department Head and the student.

### **Note: Confidentiality of Records**

Criminal background screening records are confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than (1) faculty/staff involved in the case as indicated above and (2) with the agencies or hospitals or request them. All records will be kept in a secure location in the Dean's office.

### **Individual Courses**

On occasion students who take particular courses but are not yet accepted into any programs within the college may be asked to submit a CBC to participate in an "observation activity" at a particular agency that requires background screening. In these cases the results will be submitted to the agency/hospital setting for review. Those students who are unable to participate in the activity due to a past conviction will be given an alternative assignment.

## Drug Testing Policy

The faculty in the Dietetic Internship Program have a responsibility to prepare students to engage in the safe, ethical, and legal practice of Nutrition-Dietetics. This responsibility includes protecting members of the public and of the health care community from unsafe or unprofessional conduct of students enrolled in the Dietetic Internship Program. It is within this context that students can be academically sanctioned, disciplined, or dismissed from the program for such behaviors as use of illegal drugs and alcohol.

The clinical facility to which the student is assigned for supervised practice experience will inform the student if a drug test is required. If a drug test is required, the Dietetic Internship will inform the student when the drug test will need to be performed prior to supervised practice placement, and will advise the student as to an approved site to have the drug test performed. The student is responsible for scheduling the drug test and is responsible for the costs of the drug test. The student will provide information to the drug testing site so that written results of the drug test can be sent directly to the preceptor of the supervised practice site and to the Dietetic Internship Director.

A positive (failed) drug test is considered a violation of Western Carolina University's Code of Student Conduct. In addition, the student with a positive drug test likely will not be allowed to begin the scheduled supervised practice rotation. Even if a repeat drug test is allowed by the supervised practice site and is subsequently negative, it is unlikely that the student will be able to complete the scheduled supervised practice experience because of time constraints or because the site will still not want to risk having the student working with their patients.

The student with a positive drug test will be referred to Western Carolina University's Department of Student Ethics (DSCE). The DSCE will initiate the Student Conduct Process upon receipt of a report of the positive drug test. Upon notification by DSCE that the Student Conduct Process has been completed, the Dietetic Internship Director, in consultation with the Department Head and other department faculty as appropriate, will use the results of the DSCE findings and the student's prior academic performance and professional behavior to determine an appropriate course of action to include the following options:

- a) Immediate dismissal from the program
- b) Continuation in the didactic aspect of the program with rescheduling of the supervised practice experience as possible
- c) Dismissal from the program with the option of readmission in the subsequent academic sequence (typically one full year)

The Dietetic Internship Director and Department Head will determine a grade for the supervised practice practicum that was not completed in a timely way (Withdraw, Incomplete or Unsatisfactory). In adherence with Graduate School policy, an unsatisfactory grade will result in automatic dismissal.

If the student continues in the program or returns after dismissal, drug testing will be required prior to all supervised practice experiences. Random drug testing of the student will also be an option. A second positive drug test will result in automatic dismissal from the program.

Western Carolina University

Dietetic Internship Program

Policy: Prior Assessed Learning (PAL)

Effective Date: August 2010

**POLICY:** WCU's Dietetic Internship Program participates in the Prior Assessed Learning (PAL) program recognized by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education. PAL is designed to grant internship credit in specific rotations of the internship based on the qualified applicant's previous life experiences including work, volunteer, achievement, and graduate education. Interns may be granted prior learning from other programs (i.e., dietetic technician training, culinary technology, hotel and tourism) or extensive work experience in practice (i.e. food service management, WIC nutritionist, dietetic technician). Coursework in a DPD (didactic program in dietetics) undergraduate dietetics program is excluded from PAL.

PAL application process: Complete Form 1 (reference/contact person's information, dates of experience) and the PAL form(s) applicable to the rotations for which you want to apply for PAL: Form 2 Food Service; Form 3 Community Nutrition; and Form 4 Clinical Nutrition. These forms will be available through the WCU's DI Program website <http://www.wcu.edu/4680.asp> or by calling or e-mailing the Dietetic Internship Director.

A PAL application is made after an applicant is officially appointed to the WCU Dietetic Internship (after D&D Digital matching process is complete) mid April for notification dates of the internship program. Deadline for PAL applications and documentation to be received by the WCU Dietetic Internship Program is the third Monday of May. Send materials to the WCU Dietetic Internship Director, School of Health Sciences, G04 Moore Hall, Cullowhee, NC 28723. Questions may be directed to (828) 227-2659 or [smrobison@email.wcu.edu](mailto:smrobison@email.wcu.edu). No late applications will be accepted.

The Internship Director will review all submitted PAL forms and determine if any credit will be given. Additional documentation or clarification may be requested. Calls, e-mails or letters will be sent to contact persons listed on Form 1 to request verification of the applicant's documentation for prior learning.

An intern may get PAL credit for up to 4 weeks of Food Service, up to 4 weeks of Community Nutrition and up to 3 weeks of Clinical Nutrition supervised practice rotations. Maximum rotation time credited to PAL may not exceed 6 weeks. Tuition and fees for the internship remain the same regardless of the amount of PAL credit awarded.

References: CADE section of the American Dietetic Association website  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

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WCU Dietetic Internship Program Director