

Dietetics Program Handbook



The rising STAR of Texas

Texas State University

Nutrition and Foods Program

School of Family & Consumer Sciences

2014-2015

Accreditation Status

The **Dietetics Program** (http://www.fcs.txstate.edu/degrees-programs/nutr/dietetics_program.html) at Texas State University, offered in the Nutrition and Foods program (<http://www.fcs.txstate.edu/degrees-programs/nutr.html>) in the School of Family & Consumer Sciences (<http://www.fcs.txstate.edu/>), is currently granted Accreditation by the **Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)**.

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Overview of Texas State Dietetics Program Requirements

Students who are admitted to Texas State can choose a major in Nutrition and Foods, including the Dietetics Program (DP) track. Requirements for the Texas State DP are detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog, which is online (<http://www.txstate.edu/curriculum/services/catalogs/undergraduate/catalogs.html>). In addition, degree outlines can be found at <http://advising.appliedarts.txstate.edu/degrees/majors/FCS.html>. The DP track requires 126 semester hours, including, in addition to general studies courses, courses in Nutrition and Foods, Chemistry, Biology, Accounting, Agriculture, English, and Family & Consumer Sciences. In order to graduate, students must maintain a Grade Point Average of 2.75 or higher. (NOTE: To be competitive for post-graduate Dietetic Internships, the GPA should be much higher. See How to Prepare for Dietetic Internships.)

While rewarding, the DP track is also challenging. New majors who are potentially interested in obtaining the Registered Dietitian (RD) credential should declare the DP track as their major. As long as the GPA is ≥ 2.75 , students can remain in this track and graduate when they have completed all requirements. However, if grades are consistently lower, students should consult with their advisor and consider switching to the Nutrition and Foods (with a Minor) track. To graduate from this track, the Texas State GPA must be 2.5, the major GPA must be 2.5, and the minor GPA must be 2.0.

Successful DP students have an aptitude for science, exhibit a consistent work ethic, and, like all Nutrition and Foods majors, have a passion for improving the lives of others.

Advising and Preregistration

It is strongly recommended that all Nutrition and Foods students visit with their academic advisor each semester prior to registration. The advisor will review your academic transcript and recommend classes that will help keep you on schedule for graduation. The academic advisor is familiar with prerequisite requirements and can provide information about special courses, such as NUTR 4301 Career Exploration in Nutrition and Foods, which require additional preparation (http://www.fcs.txstate.edu/degrees-programs/nutr/nutr_4301). It is also strongly recommended that students preregister for classes. The Nutrition and Foods program is popular and classes fill up quickly. Students who skip advising and/or fail to preregister are much more likely to experience disappointing delays in graduation.

To schedule an advising appointment, visit <http://advising.appliedarts.txstate.edu/> or contact the nutrition advisor, Mr. Neal Idais, via email (ni1009@txstate.edu). Mr. Idais holds office hours in the main office of the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. You must secure an appointment to meet with Mr. Idais.

Career Choices in Nutrition and Foods

The DP prepares students for a variety of careers in nutrition and foods. For example, upon graduation, students are qualified for employment in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), county extension, managerial positions in food service establishments, laboratories, and in a variety of venues promoting health.

In most cases, students can significantly increase their employment potential by seeking the **Registered Dietitian (RD)** credential after graduation. An RD is a food and nutrition expert who is qualified to work in the prevention and treatment of disease by administering medical nutrition therapy in health care settings in collaboration with a medical team. Many RDs work outside of the hospital setting in industry, journalism, sports nutrition, research, sales, school lunch programs, and in wellness programs. With additional education and training, RDs can work in academic settings and/or specialize. See Frequently Asked Questions about Careers in Dietetics

(<http://www.eatright.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=146#Mike%209>).

Students who graduate from the DP also have the option of becoming a **Dietetic Technician, Registered (DTR)**. The DTR is a food and nutrition practitioner. Application directions can be found at <http://www.cdrnet.org/program-director/registration-eligibility-requirements-for-dietetic-technicians-new-pathway-iii>

How to Become a Registered Dietitian (RD)

There are 3 steps to becoming an RD:

1. Obtain a bachelor's degree at a US regionally accredited university and complete course work from an ACEND-accredited Dietetics Program (DP), and receive a Verification Statement.
2. Complete an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program. This is generally referred to as a Dietetic Internship (DI).
3. Pass a national registration examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR, <http://www.cdrnet.org/>).

Graduates of the Texas State DP receive a Verification Statement and are eligible to apply for admission to Dietetic Internships (DI). The Texas State DI is accredited by ACEND. There are many DIs in the US. All Registered Dietitians must maintain their accreditation by completing continuing professional education requirements. For more information, visit <http://www.eatright.org/BecomeanRDorDTR/content.aspx?id=8143#.UDadSERc-ls>.

How to Prepare for Dietetic Internships

Acceptance to DIs is awarded on a competitive basis, and most DIs use a computer-matching process (<http://www.dnddigital.com/>). It generally takes 8-24 months to complete a DI, depending on whether the DI is full-time or part-time. All DIs require at least 1200 hours of supervised practice. For students who wish to become RDs, it is important to begin preparation from the time you enter college, by making every effort to:

- Maintain a GPA of 3.25 or higher (in particular, earn good grades in DP and supportive science courses),
- Obtain relevant experience in nutrition and foods through work and volunteer activities,
- Develop a resume and professional portfolio that demonstrates your expertise and quality work,
- Obtain positive references from professionals who can attest to your unique skills and qualifications,
- Exhibit a professional demeanor, positive attitude, and excellent oral and written communication skills.

It is important to note that the match rate for acceptance into Dietetic Internships is approximately 50%. Graduates who are not matched during their first attempt often work for a year and then apply again.

How to Apply for Dietetic Internships

General Timeline. You should begin investigating DI programs (<http://www.eatright.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=10760>) during the end of your junior year, and apply during the last semester of your senior year.

The annual application deadlines are in February and November, with more DIs accepting applications in February. Students graduating in May or during the summer typically apply by the February deadline.

DICAS. Each DI provides directions for applying to their programs. Many use the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Services (DICAS) site (<https://portal.dicas.org/>) hosted by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association). It is recommended that you watch the DICAS instructional video at <http://www.eatright.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=186>.

In general, DICAS requires that you create an account and provide personal and background information, including details about your college education (including transcripts for all colleges attended), details about DP courses, contact information of your DP Director (Mrs. Brasfield at Texas State), a list of awards, experience, and volunteer activities, an updated resume, three letters of reference (2 academic and 1 from volunteer/work experience), a list of DIs for which you are applying, etc. It takes some time to gather these materials. This system requires \$40 to apply for the first DI, and an additional \$20 for each

additional program to which the student applies.

Computer Matching. Application to most DIs includes a computer matching process. Application is made online at D&D Digital (<https://www.dnndigital.com/ada/index.php>). Applicants rank their preference for all internship to which they apply. This system requires \$50 to register.

Specific Timeline. For those applying in February, the DICAS portal opens December 1, the application deadline is in February, and results are reported at the D&D Digital (matching) website (<http://www.dnndigital.com/>) on April 1. For those applying in November, the DICAS portal opens July 1. This process requires a \$50 fee.

How to Become a Dietetic Technician, Registered (DTR)

To obtain the DTR credential, graduates from the Texas State DP must pass a national DTR exam administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR, <http://www.cdrnet.org/>).

Professional Memberships

Students are encouraged to join the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) as a student member (www.eatright.org). AND membership will help you find AND scholarships, search for specific employment, network with other nutrition students and professionals, and provide access to the Journal.

It is strongly recommended that all students participate in the Student Nutrition Organization (SNO) at Texas State. Besides providing friends and colleagues, SNO meetings hosts a variety of speakers, including professionals who provide insight into employment and professors describing how to become a Registered Dietitian. SNO also hosts activities that might provide you with volunteer experience. Once you are enrolled at Texas State, you can join the SNO TRACS site. When you pay your SNO dues, you also automatically join the Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (<http://eatrighttexas.org>).

Texas State DP Policies

Verification Statements. To receive a Verification Statement from the Texas State DP Director, students enrolled in the DP must:

1. Successfully complete all DP degree requirements, which are described in the undergraduate catalog and during student advising appointments.
2. Provide accurate permanent physical and email addresses to Texas State. (It is helpful if you complete a survey (link emailed shortly after graduation by DP Director) verifying contact information.
3. The DP Director will mail 5 copies of the Verification Statement to the address provided.

Verification statements are issued after the University Registrar has posted the final grades and indicated the bachelor's degree was issued on the designated graduation day.

Students who already have a bachelor's degree can complete the dietetics curriculum in consultation with the DP Director to obtain a Verification Statement. Students enrolled in the MS in Human Nutrition take a combination of undergraduate and graduate courses, in consultation with the DP Director, and receive a Verification Statement upon completion of the designated courses.

Course Substitutions. When students have attended other universities prior to coming to Texas State, they must submit their transcripts for review. Transfer courses from other institutions in Texas that automatically transfer as Texas State equivalents can be found at <http://www.admissions.txstate.edu/future/transfer/equivalency-guides.html>. For Nutrition and Foods courses taken at colleges or universities outside of Texas, the DP Director will review the syllabus and textbooks used in each course (provided by the student) and determine whether that course is an appropriate substitute for a specific Texas State course. If a course is considered to be an appropriate substitute, the DP Director will notify the College of Applied Arts advisor and an official substitution will be

granted. In rare cases, for second degree-seeking students, prior experience may be counted in lieu of a course. For example, a student who has a degree from a culinary school may receive a waiver for NUTR 1362 Food Systems, NUTR 2362 Food Science, and/or NUTR 4367 Food Systems Production and Management.

Complaints. Complaints about the DP should be made directly to the DP Director, Ms. Brasfield (kb41@txstate.edu). If the situation is not resolved, the student can then contact the School Director (Dr. Rodney Runyan, rcr56@txstate.edu). All complaints will be documented and handled in a professional manner. As a last resort, students may consult with the staff at ACEND (acend@eatright.org) regarding complaints about the program. For more information, the Texas State Procedures for Responding to Student Complaints is found at: <http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-06.html>.

Helpful Information/Links

CATSWEB. This site provides many helpful links for students <http://www.catsweb.txstate.edu/students.html>, and you should visit this site first when you have questions about Texas State.

Dietetics Program. http://www.fcs.txstate.edu/degrees-programs/nutr/dietetics_program.html

Undergraduate Admissions. <http://www.admissions.txstate.edu/>

Texas State Application Fee. The application fees for freshman and transfer students is \$75, and that for former students is \$40 (<http://www.admissions.txstate.edu/resources/forms.html>). More information on tuition and fees can be found at: <http://www.sbs.txstate.edu/billing.html>.

Cost of Attendance. The cost of attending Texas State is detailed at <http://www.finaid.txstate.edu/undergraduate/cost.html#COA>. For Texas Residents taking 15 hours/semester for 2 semesters, the total of tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, transportation and miscellaneous is an estimated \$21,260. Non-residents may pay as much as \$32,120 for the same time period.

Refunds and Withdrawal from the University. Information regarding refunds or withdrawal from the university can be found at <http://www.sbs.txstate.edu/students/refunds.html>. Additional information can be found at Student Services (<http://www.sbs.txstate.edu/students.html>). The difference between dropping and withdrawing is described at <http://www.registrar.txstate.edu/>.

Financial Aid. <http://www.finaid.txstate.edu/>

Student Privacy. To learn how the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affects your privacy, see <http://www.registrar.txstate.edu/persistent-links/ferpa.html>.

Student Health Center. <http://www.healthcenter.txstate.edu/>

Counseling Center. <http://www.counseling.txstate.edu/>

Academic Calendar. <http://www.registrar.txstate.edu/persistent-links/academic-calendar.html>

Suggestions for Professional Success

Professionalism. Successful students adopt a professional attitude and maintain that attitude through their careers. This attitude should manifest in the classroom, when among peers, and when communicating with the faculty and staff at Texas State. For example, students should take care to use correct grammar and good communication skills when writing emails to professors and mentors. In addition, students should make every effort to gain additional experience through paid or volunteer work. Participation in the Student Nutrition Organization (SNO) often provides volunteer experience. Volunteering also fosters a spirit of community service, which is an essential feature of the dietetics profession.

Study Groups. The DP curriculum is challenging. Successful students often study together for exams. Teaching information to another solidifies learning.

Job Shadowing. If at all possible, students should make every effort to shadow Registered Dietitians in a variety of settings. Shadowing provides experience beyond the classroom, and can help students transition from classroom learning to professional application.

Nutrition and Foods Mission

The Texas State University Nutrition and Foods program mission is to:

- Involve students in research, instruction, and service;
- Advise students to achieve optimal education and career direction;
- Prepare graduates for post graduate education;
- Prepare graduates for careers in industry, dietetics, government, private advocacy programs, research, and/or academia;
- Facilitate attainment of the post-graduate Registered Dietitian credential by qualified students; and
- Promote life-long learning and pursuit of excellence for faculty and students.

Dietetics Program Goals and Objectives

- 1. The Texas State Dietetics Program will prepare graduates for acceptance into dietetic internships and/or nutrition related employment.**
 - A. 75% of freshman enrolled in the DP will complete the program requirements within 6 years (150% of program length).
 - B. 25% of DP students will apply for admission to dietetic internships within a year of graduation and 30% will apply for admission into dietetic internships within 5 years.
 - C. 50% of DP students who apply for dietetic internships will be accepted within a year of graduation.
 - D. 80% of DP graduates who take the RD Registration Exam will pass the first time they take the exam.
 - E. In NUTR 4301 (Career Exploration in Nutrition and Foods), 100% of assignments will provide assistance for students in seeking employment.
 - F. 100% of all DP students will prepare a professional portfolio prior to graduation.
 - G. 50% of DP graduates will be employed in a nutrition-related job that provides a contribution to the community within a year of graduation.
 - H. 80% of students enrolled in NUTR 4301 (Career Exploration in Nutrition and Foods) will receive high rankings and positive evaluations from site mentors.
 - I. The program website will be regularly reviewed for accuracy and relevant information (including links to the AND and ACEND websites, and achievement of program objectives), and updated by October 1 of each year.
 - J. Every semester, the DP and/or DI directors will deliver a presentation to the Student Nutrition Organization about how to apply for dietetic internships.
 - K. During each fall and spring semester, the Student Nutrition Organization (SNO) will host at least 5 “career-building” presentations by professionals in dietetics and nutrition-related jobs.
- 2. The Texas State Dietetics Program will prepare graduates for lifelong learning using a research-based approach.**
 - A. 10% of graduates will enroll in graduate school within 5 years of graduation
 - B. Each year, 100% of Nutrition and Foods tenured/tenure-track faculty will involve undergraduates in laboratory or community-based research.
 - C. 100% of Nutrition and Foods tenured/tenure-track faculty will apply for an average of 1 research grant per year.
 - D. 100% of Nutrition and Foods tenured/tenure-track faculty will supervise or serve on the committee of at least 1 graduate student defending his or her thesis each year.

Results of outcome measures can be obtained upon request (kb41@txstate.edu).