Dietetic Internship
Preceptor Handbook

Respect, Recognize, Reward
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Introduction to the Preceptor Handbook

This handbook and associated materials were created to serve as tools and resources for the preceptors who have so graciously agreed to precept for the University of Central Arkansas Dietetic Interns. According to data from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (A.N.D), many preceptors express that they feel poorly prepared for their role as a preceptor, as it is not a typical component of dietetics education and related fields. In addition, the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the A.N.D. has recently revised the Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards (ERAS) for Dietetic Internships; therefore, some aspects of the dietetic internship may be new to even the most seasoned preceptors.
Thank You

I want to express my most sincere appreciation to you for agreeing to precept interns in the UCA supervised practice program. As a preceptor, you are an essential and integral component of dietetics education and that there would be no supervised practice without YOU! I know you agreed to take on the role of preceptor in addition to the traditional responsibilities of your job and out of your willingness to support nutrition education and help develop skilled practitioners.

I view you, the preceptor, as my partner in the education of dietetic interns. My goal is to have you actively participate in the continuous quality improvement process surrounding the UCA Dietetic Internship (DI). Your input regarding the interns, scheduling, rotations, assignments, etc. is essential to the success of this internship. I RESPECT your expertise and welcome your feedback on a continuous basis, both through informal and formal means. Please feel free to contact me through email, nroofe@uca.edu, or phone, 501.680.3281.

As the Director and sole internship faculty, it is difficult for me to always know what will work best for all sites, preceptors, and students. Please communicate to me what is working well and what processes require improvement or modification. In addition, I invite you to participate in the more formal UCA dietetic internship program evaluations, dietetic intern selection committee, and the UCA DI program advisory board which meets annually. Please contact me if you are interested in serving in an advisory capacity.

Nina Roofe, PhD, RDN, LD, FAND
**Introduction to Supervised Practice**

In order to earn the Registered Dietitian (RD) credential, registered dietitians must meet the following criteria:

- Complete a minimum of a bachelor’s degree at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work accredited or approved by ACEND of the A.N.D.
- Complete an **ACEND-accredited supervised practice program** (aka dietetic internship) at a health-care facility, community agency, or a foodservice corporation or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies.
- Pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).
- Complete continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration.

The supervised practice program represents a crucial step in developing the intern from “beginner” to “entry-level” competence. Competence is defined as the quality or state of having requisite or adequate ability or qualities. The supervised practice program provides an opportunity for dietetic interns to practice or perform dietetics-related activities under supervision while building skills, gradually increasing workload and complexity of work, and applying didactic learning to real-life dietetics practice. Didactic education and traditional exams, while excellent methods for developing and accessing foundation knowledge, cannot replace supervised practice.

The supervised practice program offers an environment in which dietetic interns can learn new skills and apply classroom education. Supervised practice will help the intern attain competencies and learning outcomes appropriate to the entry level dietetics practitioner. Essentially, interns will be learning what you, the preceptor and professional, do on a daily basis as part of your job. Upon culmination of each rotation, interns should have developed the skills necessary for them to perform your job in a satisfactory manner. It is not expected that interns will be able to perform your job with the same level of skill as you, a seasoned professional.

Professionals in each field might have a wide variety of education, experience, and certification; some are registered dietitians, others are school nutrition specialists, chefs, or administrators. It is experience and mastery of each individual’s field of expertise that are important as a preceptor, not title or level of education. Sometimes new preceptors are uncertain about just how much they should teach. We encourage you to share any information you believe is important to nutrition, food service, clinical or community nutrition. You live this profession everyday—you know what interns need to know to be successful.
Roles of the Preceptor

Preceptors perform the following 6 essential roles:

- **Planner** – Preceptors serve as planners in a number of capacities. On a day-to-day basis, they are responsible for planning the experiences and learning activities of the intern. In addition, they play an integral role in the planning and modification of the curriculum and supervised practice experience in conjunction with the DI team.

- **Role model** – By exemplifying professional behaviors and the principles outlined in the Code of Ethics, preceptors teach by example.

- **Information provider** – By sharing relevant information in their area of expertise and staying current with recent developments and research, preceptors serve as information providers and assist interns with gathering the necessary information for competency development.

- **Facilitator of learning** – Preceptors function as facilitators of learning by coupling experiences and tools with guided questioning and feedback. In this manner, interns are able to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

- **Resource developer** – By guiding interns to the appropriate materials (current research, protocols, practice guidelines, manuals, etc.) and other professionals that will assist interns in their practice and professional development, preceptors serve as resource developers.

- **Assessors of learning** – Preceptors serve as front-line evaluators of interns’ learning and competence as they progress through the supervised practice rotation.
General Benefits of Precepting Dietetic Interns

Serving as a preceptor can provide a number of benefits to both you and your institution. These benefits might include:

- Enhanced productivity and project completion – Often certain projects are placed on hold due to lack of resources and time. Such projects, where appropriate, can be delegated to interns. Through such projects, interns learn and develop competency while making real-life contributions to the supervised practice site. Interns can perform certain tasks for you such as conduct in-services or quality improvement which you may have difficulty completing during your usual schedule. Interns can help give better supervision of employees. They can act as an extension of the dietitian rather than as someone else to supervise.

- Improved employee morale and performance – Team members who are given a role in teaching interns often feel a greater sense of value and contribution to the team.

- Alternative perspectives through fresh eyes – Interns may bring new perspectives to a facility. Often through an intern’s questions and a preceptor’s expertise, best practices are identified. Interns can help define what you do and how you do it. Interns’ questions and your explanations often result in clearer ways of doing things.

- Challenge and variety – Interns can provide variety in the day-to-day routine and challenge the staff and preceptor through their questions and learning process. Learning can be rewarding at all ages and all levels of experience. Interns increase your learning since they bring new knowledge and perspectives to your institution. Interns can solve problems creatively (e.g., assign interns to a particular problem that they will research and resolve.)

- Professional development opportunities – The Dietetics Preceptor Training Course and other activities that support effective precepting can contribute to the preceptor’s portfolio and professional development. Your role as a preceptor may be included in your CDR professional development portfolio. Interns can assist with journal clubs to help update staff on the latest information in dietetic practice.

Benefits of Precepting UCA Dietetic Interns

- Open invitation to UCA College of Health & Behavioral Sciences webinars and additional professional development opportunities
- Access to networking with other preceptors at the spring Preceptor Symposium
- On-site access to UCA Torreyson Library
- CPEUs
  - Spring Symposium (4 CPEUs)—on site or print version
  - Molly Kellogg Counseling Modules (4 CPEUs)—request access code from DI Director
Progression of Learning

The supervised practice experience is designed to build intern skills and entry-level competency upon the intern’s existing foundation of didactic knowledge. Throughout each supervised practice rotation, the goal is to gradually increase the intern’s level of:

- Responsibility
- Proficiency
- Independence
- Competence

While at first the intern may simply observe, the intern should gradually take on increasing portions of the preceptor’s role until the intern is able to assume all entry-level aspects of the preceptor’s job independently. Throughout the rotation, the intern should gradually progress from heavily supervised practice to increasing independence and minimal supervision. Responsibilities and problems should progress from basic to complex, and the work load and speed expectations should increase similarly.

Mission

The mission of the UCA Dietetic Internship is to provide a high quality program in dietetics, dedicated to assisting interns with development of needed skills for the varied roles of the dietitian in today’s society by providing a supervised practice component which ultimately culminates in registration eligibility with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Interns will be provided opportunities to develop expertise in nutrition therapy, community nutrition, foodservice systems management, and business/entrepreneur competencies while developing professional attitudes and competent professional behavior.

Goals

The dietetic internship implements its mission through the establishment of the following program goals:

1. Prepare graduates to be competent, professional entry-level dietitians.
2. Provide graduates with a basic knowledge of a broad range of career opportunities in the field of dietetics.
3. Prepare graduates for employment in community health and/or community nutrition programs.
Program

The UCA Dietetic Internship is a fifteen month Master of Science Dietetic Internship (MSDI), concurrent with the UCA academic calendar, beginning mid-May and concluding mid-August of the next year (for example May, 2013 entrants graduate August, 2014). The program has a community nutrition concentration and consists of 1240 hours of supervised practice, a five day orientation, and a final exit week. The DI provides full time supervised practice hours over 15 months to meet the 1240 hour requirement. The hours are distributed as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>SP Hours</th>
<th>Planned Completion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Foodservice</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>First summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Second Summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Fall/Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total SP Hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>1240</strong></td>
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ACEND Requirements

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics defines 23 standards for Dietetic Internships. Five of these 23 standards involve preceptors.

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<th>Eligibility for ACEND Accreditation</th>
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<td>2. Title IV Compliance for Free-Standing Programs</td>
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<td>3. Consortia</td>
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<td>5. Program Goals</td>
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<td>6. Program Objectives</td>
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<td>7. Program Assessment</td>
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<td>8. On-going Program Improvement</td>
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<th>Curriculum &amp; Student Learning Objectives</th>
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<td>9. Program Concentrations</td>
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<td>10. Curricular Mapping</td>
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<td>11. Learning Activities</td>
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<td>12. Curriculum Length</td>
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<td>13. Learning Assessment</td>
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<td>14. On-going Curricular Improvement</td>
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<th>Program Staff and Resources</th>
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<td>15. Responsibilities of the Program Director</td>
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<td>16. Faculty and Preceptors</td>
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<td>17. Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<td>18. Program Resources</td>
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<td>19. Supervised-Practice Facilities</td>
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<th>Students</th>
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<td>20. Student Progression and Professionalism</td>
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<td>21. Student Complaints</td>
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<td>22. Information to Prospective Students and the Public</td>
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Standard 10: Curricular Mapping

The program must map its curriculum around ACEND’s Core Knowledge and Competencies using sound educational methodology to prepare graduates to enter dietetics practice in any setting and produce optimal client or patient outcomes.

Guideline 10.1
a. The curriculum map must identify didactic and supervised practice course(s) that interns will complete to meet each of the Core Knowledge and Competencies, including the Support Knowledge and the Concentration Competencies defined in Standard 9, Program Concentrations.

b. The curriculum map must include supervised practice experiences that occur in various settings or practice areas to achieve the competencies in a manner appropriate for implementing the curriculum. Programs should include such areas as acute care, extended care, public health/community, prevention and wellness, and food service, but may also include other areas such as education, research, informatics, genetics/genomics, management, consultation, and so on.

c. The curriculum map must sequentially and logically organize the progression of didactic and supervised practice courses from introductory to more advanced learning activities and build on previous knowledge or experience to achieve the expected depth and breadth of knowledge and competency by completion of the program.

d. The curriculum map must culminate in experiences (such as planned staff experience) to demonstrate entry-level competence.

Standard 11: Learning Activities

The program’s curriculum must provide learning activities to attain all the Competencies defined to enter practice as a registered dietitian.

Guideline 11.1
a. Learning activities must prepare interns for professional practice with patients/clients with various conditions, including, but not limited to overweight and obesity, diabetes, cancer; cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and renal diseases.

b. Learning activities must prepare interns to implement the nutrition care process with various populations and diverse cultures, including infants, children, adolescents, adults, pregnant/lactating females and the elderly.

c. Learning activities for interns must develop collaboration, teamwork, problem-solving, critical-thinking and self-assessment skills; and personal and professional attitudes and values, cultural competence, leadership and decision-making skills.

d. Learning activities must use a variety of educational approaches (such as field trips, role-playing, simulations, problem-based learning, classroom instruction, laboratory experiences) necessary for delivery of curriculum content, to meet learner needs and to facilitate learning objectives.

e. Learning activities must include opportunities for interns to participate in interdisciplinary learning activities.

f. Learning activities must be documented in course syllabi and supervised practice rotation descriptions with clearly defined objectives reflecting the breadth and depth of didactic and supervised practice course content and expected student performance.
Standard 16: Faculty and Preceptors
The program must have a sufficient number of qualified faculty and preceptors to provide the depth and breadth of learning activities required in the curriculum and exposure to the diversity of practice.

Guideline 16.1
In addition to the program director, other full-time or adjunct faculty (such as practitioners) must teach profession-specific courses in the program.

Guideline 16.2
a. Program faculty, including the program director, must meet the college/university’s criteria for appointment, if the program is sponsored by a college/university.
b. Preceptors must be credentialed or licensed as appropriate to meet state and federal regulations for the area in which they are supervising interns.
c. The program must have a process for the periodic review of the effectiveness of faculty and preceptors.

Guideline 16.3
a. New faculty members, instructors, and teaching assistants must be provided an orientation to the mission, goals, values, and educational philosophy of the dietetics program.
b. Preceptors must be provided orientation to the supervised practice objectives and professional competencies before assuming responsibilities.

Standard 17: Continuing Professional Development
Program faculty, including the program director and preceptors, must show evidence of continued competency appropriate to teaching responsibilities, through professional work experience, graduate education, continuing education, research or other activities leading to professional growth and the advancement of their profession.

Guideline 17.1
a. All faculty members should receive on-going training to become proficient in the use of the program’s technology and educational methodologies.
b. All faculty members, including preceptors, instructors, and teaching assistants should receive on-going training based on evaluation by the program director and feedback from interns.
c. All faculty members, including preceptors, should be familiar with the purpose of ACEND’s accreditation process and intent of the standards.
Standard 19: Supervised-Practice Facilities
The program must have policies and procedures to maintain written agreements with institutions, organizations and/or agencies providing supervised practice experiences to meet the competencies. The policies and procedures must address the selection and periodic evaluation of adequacy and appropriateness of facilities, to ensure that facilities are able to provide supervised practice learning experiences compatible with the competencies that interns are expected to achieve.

Guideline 19.1
a. A program under the Didactic Nutrition and Dietetic Education Program standards is not required to demonstrate compliance with Standard 19 and its guidelines if it does not provide supervised practice to its students.

b. Agreements must be signed by administrators with appropriate authority in advance of placing students/interns.

c. Agreements must delineate the rights and responsibilities of both the sponsoring organization and affiliating institutions, organizations and/or agencies.
Course Sequence

Food Service/Administration (1st) Summer – 12 Hours of course credit
Summer I: FACS 5321 Nutrition Services Administration
    FACS 5315 Nutrition Services Practicum I
Summer II: FACS 5316 Nutrition Services Practicum II
    FACS 5317 Community Nutrition Practicum

Fall: FACS 5324 Nutrition Assessment

Spring: NUTR 6335 Nutrition Counseling

Clinical (2nd) Summer – 6 Hours of course credit
May Intercession: FACS 5318 Clinical Nutrition Practicum
10-week: FACS 6313 Diet Therapy

NOTE: Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 average in all graduate level coursework.

Rotations

The rotations are designed to provide interns with in-depth experiences in a diverse array of
dietetics environments including long-term care facilities, dialysis centers, school food service
organizations, research, and community outreach organizations. The community concentration
rotation is designed to provide interns with an in-depth experience and focus within community
nutrition and public health. Extended supervised practice in sites such as local and state health
departments, health education centers, and nutrition outreach programs will prepare students for
entry level practice in the field of community and public health nutrition.

At this time, the UCA dietetic internship is solely a full-time track on-site program offered only
once a year (spring match). The planned time for completion of the full-time program is
approximately 15 months, which includes 5 days of orientation. While 15 months is the minimum
time for completion of the DI, all interns are expected to complete the DI within 22.5 months
(exceptions may be made by the DI Director based on extenuating circumstances). The DI will
roughly align with the academic year, beginning in May of one year and concluding in August of
the following year.

A didactic component to the DI will be provided independent of supervised practice hours to
prepare interns for the upcoming rotations. A portion of the didactic component will be provided
during orientation with the remainder provided in the form of weekly or online classes.
Program Calendar

The planned time for completion for this full-time, on-site dietetic internship (DI) is approximately 15 months, which includes 5 days of orientation and ~6 weeks of vacation (see below). The formal graduation will occur with the August university commencement (assuming completion of all program and rotation requirements).

Interns will be given ~6 weeks of designated vacation during the internship depending on the UCA academic calendar. The 6 weeks of vacation are subject to change but generally as follows:

- **Memorial Day** – Monday, May X, 20XX (1 day)
- **Labor Day** – Monday, September X, 20XX (1 day)
- **Thanksgiving Break** - Wednesday, November X, 20XX to Friday, November X, 20XX (3 days)
- **Winter Break** - Monday, December X, 20XX to Friday, January X, 20XX (4 weeks)
- **Spring Break** - Monday, March X, 20XX to Friday, March X, 20XX (1 week)
- **Personal Day** – this unscheduled personal day is to be reserved for a time of need (illness, bereavement, etc.) (1 day)
Responsibilities of Preceptors, Interns, and the DI Director

Responsibilities of Preceptors

- Conduct a thorough orientation to the supervised practice setting.
- Meet with the intern(s) that you precept on a regular basis (incorporating weekly meetings).
- Identify and facilitate learning activities that support the attainment of competencies/learning outcomes.
- Assist the intern(s) in setting appropriate goals and a schedule for completion of competencies during the rotation.
- Provide assistance and supervision as needed.
- Evaluate each intern’s progress and provide timely formative and summative feedback. Let interns and the DI Director know if they are not meeting expectations early in the rotation so they can learn and adjust. Intern evaluation results should be a surprise at the end of a rotation.
- Complete required supervised practice documentation in a timely manner.
- Model evidence-based practice, professional behavior, time management, and ethical practice.
- Communicate each intern’s progress and any issues regarding the intern(s) or the supervised practice experience in general to the internship Director.

Responsibilities of Interns

- Prepare for and participate in all supervised practice activities. Assume responsibility for their own learning and be self-directed learners.
- Demonstrate professional attributes including timeliness, organization, \textit{RESPECT}, a positive attitude, motivation, open-mindedness, flexibility, and patience.
- Adhere to the dress code of the facility and of the DI Student Handbook.
- Communicate regularly with preceptors regarding expectations, progress, questions, and difficulties.
- Be \textit{respectful} of preceptors’ willingness to precept and the \textit{preceptors’ full-time commitment and priority to providing patient/client care and/or high-quality food and nutrition services in addition to precepting}.
- Be respectful of experience and knowledge gained through professional practice.
- Expect a challenging supervised practice experience while acknowledging that many skills will take years to develop and require experience far beyond the internship.
- Manage their time well, while recognizing the commitment to intensive and long hours in most rotations.
- Manage their health and personal lives in order to be able to give the supervised practice experience their full focus and energy.
Responsibilities of the DI Director

- Communicate any changes in policy and procedures, curriculum, rotation descriptions, or competencies/learning outcomes with preceptors and interns.
- Monitor progress of interns through the competency evaluation forms.
- Address any concerns raised by either preceptors or interns in a timely manner.
- Conduct regular site visits for on-site interns.
- Incorporate preceptor feedback into the continuous quality improvement process.
- Work with preceptors to develop alternatives and solutions to challenges and difficulties as they arise.
- Facilitate didactic coursework and evaluation.

Grievances

If an intern is unhappy with any aspect of the program, he or she is encouraged to make an appointment with the Internship Director. Any problem with the supervised practice facility should first be brought to the preceptor’s attention by the intern in a professional and thoughtful manner. If the intern feels that the problem with the facility is not being solved by the preceptor, the problem should be brought to the Internship Director.

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) will review complaints that relate to a program’s compliance with the accreditation standards. ACEND is concerned about the quality and continued improvement of the dietetics education programs but does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal.

A copy of the accreditation/approval standards and/or the Commission’s policy may be obtained by contacting the ACEND staff at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (A.N.D.) at 120 South Riverside Plaza, suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606, 312-899-5400.
Preceptor Training

In an effort to \textit{REWARD} you for your time and to make the precepting of UCA dietetic interns as efficient and seamless as possible, \textbf{we are asking every preceptor to attend the preceptor symposium each spring}. Additionally, we strongly recommend that all preceptors complete the on-line CDR Dietetic Preceptor Training Course.

UCA Preceptor Symposium

Preceptors will be invited to attend a virtual or on-site training symposium prior to the May internship start. Preceptors will be provided electronic access to all internship rotation-specific forms and information. Materials will be available a minimum of one week prior to the internship start date and be maintained throughout the year. Application for CPEUs will be made for both the virtual and the on-site participants.

CDR Dietetics Preceptor Training Course

The Commission on Dietetics Registration (CDR) offers a free, on-line Dietetics Preceptor Training Course. The course is available to RDs as well to preceptors who are not RDs. For RDs, 8 CPEUs are provided following completion of the course. The course is available on-line and can be accessed at your convenience. The course is self-paced and tracks what sections have been completed. In addition, the course includes a component which allows you to view comments, best practices, and suggestions from other preceptors who have taken the course. The course may be accessed via the following link: \url{http://cdrnet.educationdirector.com/}

After accessing the web site you will be prompted to complete login information. You do not have to be a member of A.N.D. to access this course. The course title is: \textit{Dietetics Preceptor Training Program}.

The course takes several hours to complete. We suggest that you work on one module per day over the course of a week. The sample forms in the course do not have to be completed. You will be provided with forms for the UCA internship prior to any rotation. Many professionals can earn continuing education credit by completing the quizzes and the entire module. Follow the module instructions for earning credits.

Molly Kellogg Counseling Modules

The UCA DI has purchased the Step by Step Program from Molly Kellogg which provides 4 CPEUs for Registered Dietitians. Please contact the DI Director for instructions and access code.
Preceptor’s Checklist for Intern Orientation to Facility

The following are some important topics to include in the orientation process for interns at your site (please adapt to your particular site as needed):

— How students will obtain an appropriate ID (if needed)
— What, if any, office, locker, or other space the student may use
— Parking restrictions
— How the student will access phones, pages, computers/library, etc.
— Required facility orientation (dress code, HIPAA, etc.)
— Meals policy
— Mission & goals of the facility
— Facility policies & code of conduct
— Introduction to other staff: Food Service Professional, Administrator, or Dietitian job description at site
— Typical routine and schedule (i.e. work hours, breaks, special events, rounds)
— Resources (i.e. manuals, education materials, etc.)
— Tools – items the intern should bring to rotations (i.e. calculator, lab coat, binder containing essential documents)
— Intern’s learning style, comfort, and experience with facility
— Planning and goal setting (including when this will occur)
— Required documentation the preceptor must submit regarding a student’s progress and evaluations (and schedule)
Competencies and Intern Evaluations

The entire process of intern rotations, competencies/learning objectives, and evaluation will be covered in great depth during the preceptor symposium. The following is simply a brief overview of the process:

1. Both preceptors and interns will be provided with a Rotation Competency Evaluation Form for each rotation prior to the start of each rotation. Preceptors and interns should familiarize themselves with all of these documents prior to the start of each rotation.

2. The Rotation Competency Evaluation Form details the following:
   - **Planned Experiences** –
     Suggested planned experiences or activities that should satisfy the desired competency or learning outcome
   - **Competency/Outcome** –
     Competencies or learning outcomes associated with the selected planned experience
   - **Assessment Criteria and Results** –
     The assessment results and evaluator for the selected competencies

3. When preceptors are responsible for evaluating a competency, they will have access to the specific Rotation Competency Evaluation Form for the rotation / assignment. Preceptors will use the rubric to evaluate the intern's work and rate their competency. Evaluation forms should be completed as competencies are completed, not only at the end of the rotation.
Planning and Feedback

We are asking preceptors and interns to set aside a specific time each week for a preceptor/intern conference (in addition to less formal interactions during the week) to do the following:

- Set goals/plan for the following week
- Allow for intern questions and discussion
- Discuss preceptor concerns
- Summarize the learning and experiences that occurred during the week
- Discuss and complete evaluation regarding competencies that were completed during the week
- Identify areas that require additional development
- When feasible, Fridays may be an excellent time for this meeting. This will allow the intern to prepare for the following week over the weekend.

How to Give Effective Feedback

Evaluation is an important part of the learning process and should be viewed in a positive light. This is not always easy to do or comfortable to do but it must be done. Evaluation tells interns what they do correctly and helps them to modify performance when needed.

Clear expectations lead to improved outcomes and evaluations.

You will receive specific evaluation forms to complete when interns work with you. These forms should be completed and reviewed with the intern. The information on the form is a learning tool for the intern as well as a method to determine that the intern has achieved the desired state of competency. When you review the completed form with the intern, the intern is able to have a behavior to model when s/he is required to do evaluations on the job as well as able to learn and modify their own behaviors as needed.

Give Positive Feedback

Trust and support will be enhanced and anxiety reduced if the preceptor takes care to offer feedback in positive terms. The following rules are a guide for providing constructive feedback:

- Start and end with something positive—what is the intern doing well?
- Focus feedback on teaching and learning.
- Focus feedback on the behavior rather than the person.
- Provide objective feedback on observation, and cite specific examples.
- Describe rather than judge.
- Point out specific causes and effects—the positive and negative consequences of one’s actions.
- Share ideas rather than give advice.
- Explore alternatives rather than give solutions.
- Give only the amount of feedback the receiver can use.
- Provide feedback valuable for the receiver rather than the giver.
Consider the following when assessing and evaluating the intern’s:

**Technical Skills**
- Specifically indicate how the intern has improved.
- Direct intern’s attention to the cues.
- If demonstrating, leave part for the intern to do.
- Clarify why acceptable work is not perfect.
- Praise specific aspects rather than generalities.
- Direct intern’s attention to relevant cues and make sure he/she can detect them.
- Prompt intern to help give answers to your questions.
- Determine if intern needs directions on what to do.
- Set clear (operationally defined expectations) criteria for performance.
- Ask questions during demonstrations to direct attention to various components.
- Describe contingencies to influence behavior.

**Interpersonal Skills**
- Never belittle intern’s personality or personal characteristics.
- Give intern the benefit of the doubt that he/she is not trying to get away with something.
- If you make a mistake with an intern, acknowledge the error.
- Ask for intern’s evaluation of their own work before evaluating, to determine if intern can perceive errors.
- Avoid showing excessive anger or frustration. Get yourself under control. Then express the emotions verbally.
- Start with praise when making a correction.
- Act in a way consistent with professional values and ethics.
- Indicate what has been done correctly as well as any errors.
- Indicate how you had a similar difficulty.
- Can the intern do the required task?
- Encourage the intern to present alternatives and new ideas about procedures and processes including patient care.
- Attend to the intern’s questions and concerns so that he/she feels respected.
- Show concern for an intern who is having trouble and appears anxious.

**In the internship we consider various types of evaluation:**

**PROCESS EVALUATION.** Process evaluation or feedback should be viewed as good two-way communication between the preceptor and interns. Preceptors need to be very specific in their reinforcement and suggestions for improvement. Interns may not “catch” or understand subtle suggestions or comments. Feedback that is provided by interns regarding the preceptor’s performance is also beneficial. By learning interns’ views, the preceptor can determine if interns truly understand what is required.

Evaluation should be based on reasonable and known performance criteria. Interns cannot read the preceptors’ minds, nor do they have the same experienced perspective of what constitutes good dietetic practice. Preceptors need to listen to interns to evaluate their own communication skills. Interns may fail at performance because expectations were not clearly defined, assumptions were made without interns’ knowledge of them, or because interns had not observed a previous example. Remember that what is obvious to you as a seasoned professional is often not obvious to an intern.
Evaluation should be continuous in everything interns do. Often it is done informally. Positive reinforcement can build interns’ confidence and enthusiasm. It also helps to solidify good behaviors and practices in the early stages of rotation. Confronting poor performance as soon as possible after it occurs is also necessary. Delaying or ignoring evaluation of problem performance can lead interns to believe their work is okay. They won’t know they should change unless someone tells them. Interns who are evaluated and corrected early on, generally, have fewer difficulties in performance later.

In making suggestions for improvements to interns, make sure the interns know which suggestions are recommendations and which ones are required. Criticism should be constructive and point out in very practical, specific terms the ways that performance can be improved.

**PRODUCT or FINAL EVALUATION.** You may find that this is the most difficult type of evaluation. Final evaluation at the end of a project or rotation can be used to build interns’ confidence, to reinforce desirable performance, or to inform interns about behaviors that need to be changed in the future. It is also used by the program director to evaluate future experience needs of interns to successfully complete their program. Realistically, final evaluation may also be used to prevent unqualified interns from progressing beyond their skill and knowledge level. This is one of the hurdles that interns must successfully pass to qualify for writing the registration examination.

Criteria for the final evaluation of performance should be clear and known to interns. Evaluation criteria should be given to interns at the beginning of a rotation so that they know what is expected. The results of interns’ evaluations at the end of a rotation should NEVER come as a complete surprise. Continuous process evaluation should lead up to the final evaluation, and give interns a good idea of how they will be evaluated in the end. Interns should be evaluated in person by the preceptor and should be aware of any major comments that are made in a written evaluation before it leaves the preceptor. It is highly unethical for a preceptor to tell interns very little, or worse, that everything is fine, and then send a highly critical evaluation to the program director.

**Feedback Should:**

- be undertaken with the preceptor and intern working as allies, with common goals.
- be well-timed and expected.
- be based on first-hand data.
- be regulated in quantity and limited to behaviors that are remediable.
- be phrased in descriptive non-evaluative language.
- deal with specific performances, not generalizations.
- offer subjective data, labeled as such.
- deal with decisions and actions, rather than assumed intentions or interpretations.
The following table suggests ways to identify if you are "confronting" or "criticizing" the intern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confronting (try to use)</th>
<th>Criticizing (try to avoid)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is based on observable behaviors and facts:</td>
<td>This is based on feelings and perceptions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem</strong>--focuses on the problem, with concrete, objective facts.</td>
<td><strong>Person</strong>--focuses on the person and her attitude or traits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific</strong>--identifies specifically what should occur or change starting with the most recent event.</td>
<td><strong>General</strong>--uses general statements that may magnify the problem by using words like never, always, continually and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong>--focuses on the future and what can be changed, not on making the intern feel guilty, weak, or pessimistic; encourages intern to want to change.</td>
<td><strong>Blame</strong>--establishes blame, making the intern feel guilty and focuses on the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship</strong>--focuses on improving performance, increasing commitment, and building a positive work relationship.</td>
<td><strong>Self为中心</strong> on the needs of the preceptor and sometimes involves venting own anger or frustration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are some questions you might ask the intern based on the purpose of the questioning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of questioning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessing basic knowledge</strong></td>
<td>What are your reactions to this case?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What aspects of this problem interested you the most?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the most important variables?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic</strong></td>
<td>What is your analysis of the problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What conclusions did you draw from these data?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why were you successful in the solving this problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information-seeking</strong></td>
<td>What was the patient’s albumin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was the cost per patient per day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Why is that lab value important to consider?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What evidence do you have to support your conclusions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td>What needs to be done to achieve the nutritional outcomes you have envisioned for the client?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who needs to be included in the decisions related to the current CQI project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions on priorities</strong></td>
<td>Given the limited resources available to this community feeding center, who should be served first? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have identified 3 nutritional concerns to be addressed by the healthcare team. How would you prioritize these concerns?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prediction</strong></td>
<td>How do you think the employees will react to this new policy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When would you expect to see the benefit of the nutrition intervention in the XXX lab value?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothetical</strong></td>
<td>If your facility uses a Foley catheter for n-g tube feedings, what should you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If there is a severe blizzard in your community, how will you serve your patients and the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extension</strong></td>
<td>What are the implications of using the “closed system” of enteral tube feedings vs. the “open system” for the elderly patient population?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generalization</strong></td>
<td>Based on the financial information for this department, what are the opportunities and the threats?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Based on what you know about this specific drug, what do you know about other drugs in this class?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CRITERIA FOR FEEDBACK

Examples

Purpose: to help the intern consider changing behavior by providing information about how s/he affects others.

1. DESCRIBE the intern’s behavior RATHER THAN JUDGE the intern.
   • “I saw you using the elevator. Remember to take the stairs when possible to keep the elevators uncongested.”
   • Not, “Don’t be so lazy by taking the elevator”.

2. PROVIDE SPECIFIC FEEDBACK, NOT GENERAL.
   • “You need to wear a hairnet when you are in the kitchen.”
   • Not “You’re not prepared to work with your hair that way”.

3. PROVIDE CONCERN FOR the NEEDS OF both YOURSELF AND the INTERN.
   • “I need to take a break from this situation. Please meet me in 30 minutes in my office and we will discuss the language you used with the cook.”
   • Not, “I don’t have time for this nonsense. Don’t be rude to the cook anymore!”

4. DIRECT FEEDBACK TO SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR which the INTERN CAN actually CHANGE.
   • “The last time we met to evaluate your progress, I felt uncomfortable when you interrupted me and stood up and leaned toward me. Today when I review your progress, I will appreciate your staying seated and not interrupting. You will be given time to tell me things you believe I do not know.”

5. The INTERN SOLICITS FEEDBACK.
   • This is evidenced by the intern asking YOU how a specific situation or event or behavior was accomplished. This is an ideal situation—but not usually what occurs.

6. TIME your FEEDBACK APPROPRIATELY.
   • It should be as immediate as possible so that clarity is not lost.

7. CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING with the Intern TO ENSURE CLEAR COMMUNICATION.
   • “I want to check that we have both arrived at the same conclusions about how you will fulfill this competency. Please reiterate for me the steps you will take to complete this objective.”
How to Deal with Difficult Interns

Although the UCA DI Director and Selection Committee screen and select interns carefully, match them cautiously with each other and with preceptors, and select only the very best, we do occasionally have a difficult intern. Please respond to the difficult intern much the same as you respond to a difficult employee. If there are specific behaviors you won’t tolerate from your employees and staff, you should not tolerate them from the interns. Include the UCA DI Director as necessary as you work with the difficult intern, we must have documentation at all levels if we are expected to take any action. Sometimes the action will include simply placing the intern in another location—perhaps there is a personality conflict. Other times the action will include terminating the intern’s participation in the program entirely. These tips may help prevent an issue from escalating into a problem.

1. Provide a clear orientation for the intern (to the facility, the unit, etc.).
2. Establish ground rules -- dress code, timing, reporting.
3. Define expectations -- clarify, clarify, clarify!
4. Be purposeful and focused.
5. Explain how the typical days for work occurs.
6. Explain what is expected of them as interns.
7. Solicit information from the interns:
   a. List and explain previous experiences
   b. Explain your expectations and goals
   c. Acknowledge the role or importance of your tasks.
Tips for Efficiency

The following are some tips which may assist in creating a more positive experience for both preceptors and interns:

- Thoroughly orient the student (you may want to develop a notebook with written material the student can read and a checklist for each item)
- Agree together on daily tasks and expectations for supervised practice experiences
- Use planning tools such as prioritized To Do lists
- Set limits on the time allotted to tasks
- Encourage just-in-time learning
- Debrief at the end of an assigned task (competency) and follow up by planning for the next session
- Accomplish multiple purposes with single real-world activities
- Take advantage of technology
- Find opportunities for double-dipping = maximize benefit to the student and the facility (i.e. assigning the menu analysis project that you did not have time to finish to the intern as a way for the intern to meet a competency)
- Conduct weekly conferences

Outstanding Preceptor Awards

Each August at the Dietetic Intern Graduation Reception, three preceptors will be Recognized for their contribution to the UCA DI program. Interns will nominate preceptors in each of three areas: Community, Clinical, and Foodservice. These preceptors will also be nominated for the ArAND Outstanding Dietetics Educator Award the following spring.
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Preceptor Resources

- Website: http://uca.edu/facs/programs/dietetic-internship/preceptors/
- UCA DI Preceptor Handbook
- CDR: http://www.cdrnet.org/
- Community of AR preceptors