



# University of Central Arkansas

## **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](mailto: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 (RDN) credential, registered dietitian nutritionists 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)
  - CDR Dietetics Preceptor Course (8 CPEUs): <http://www.cdrnet.org/news/online-dietetics-preceptor-training-course-free-of-charge>
  - CPEUs awarded for precepting: 1-25 contact hours = 1 CPEU; 26-50 contact hours = 2 CPEUs; 51 and greater contact hours = 3 CPEUs; <https://www.cdrnet.org/cpeu-credit-for-preceptors>
  - 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:

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>SP Hours</b>	<b>Planned Completion</b>
Management & Foodservice	240	First summer
Community	500	Throughout
Clinical	400	Second Summer
Research	100	Fall/Spring
<b>Total SP Hours</b>	<b>1240</b>	

## ACEND Requirements

The 2017 Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics standards defines 10 standards for Dietetic Internships. Three of these 10 standards involve preceptors.

1. Program Characteristics and Resources
2. Consortia
3. Program Mission, Goals, and Objectives
4. Program Evaluation and Improvement
5. Curriculum and Learning Activities
6. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Curricular Improvement
7. Faculty and Preceptors
8. Supervised Practice / Experiential Learning Sites
9. Information to Prospective Students and the Public
10. Policies and Procedures

## **Standard 5: Curriculum and Learning Activities**

**The Core Knowledge and Competencies must be the basis on which the program curriculum and learning activities are built and at least one concentration must be identified, all within the context of the mission and goals of the program.**

**5.1** A curriculum map must be developed that:

- a. Identifies supervised practice experiences, which occur in various settings or practice areas that interns will complete to meet the core competencies and program-defined concentration competencies.
- b. Sequentially and logically organizes the progression of didactic courses and supervised practice experiences from introductory to more advanced learning activities and builds on previous knowledge or experience to achieve the expected depth and breadth of knowledge and competency by completion of the program.
- c. Culminates in experiences to demonstrate entry-level competence.

**5.2** The program's curriculum must be designed to ensure the breadth and depth of requisite knowledge and skills needed for entry-level practice as a registered dietitian nutritionist.

a. The program's curriculum must prepare interns with the following core competencies:

1. Domain 1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice: Integration of scientific information and translation of research into practice.

**Competencies: Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:**

CRDN 1.1 Select indicators of program quality and/or customer service and measure achievement of objectives.

CRDN 1.2 Apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature.

CRDN 1.3 Justify programs, products, services and care using appropriate evidence or data.

CRDN 1.4 Evaluate emerging research for application in nutrition and dietetics practice.

CRDN 1.5 Conduct projects using appropriate research methods, ethical procedures and data analysis.

CRDN 1.6 Incorporate critical-thinking skills in overall practice.

2. Domain 2. Professional Practice Expectations: Beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the professional dietitian nutritionist level of practice.

**Competencies: Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:**

CRDN 2.1 Practice in compliance with current federal regulations and state statutes and rules, as applicable, and in accordance with accreditation standards and the Scope of Nutrition and Dietetics Practice and Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics.

CRDN 2.2 Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications.

CRDN 2.3 Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings.

CRDN 2.4 Function as a member of interprofessional teams.

CRDN 2.5 Assign duties to NDTRs and/or support personnel as appropriate.

CRDN 2.6 Refer clients and patients to other professionals and services when needs are beyond individual scope of practice.

CRDN 2.7 Apply leadership skills to achieve desired outcomes.

CRDN 2.8 Demonstrate negotiation skills.

CRDN 2.9 Participate in professional and community organizations.

CRDN 2.10 Demonstrate professional attributes in all areas of practice.

- CRDN 2.11 Show cultural competence/sensitivity in interactions with clients, colleagues and staff.
- CRDN 2.12 Perform self-assessment and develop goals for self-improvement throughout the program.
- CRDN 2.13 Prepare a plan for professional development according to Commission on Dietetic Registration guidelines.
- CRDN 2.14 Demonstrate advocacy on local, state or national legislative and regulatory issues or policies impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession.
- CRDN 2.15 Practice and/or role play mentoring and precepting others.

3. Domain 3. Clinical and Customer Services: Development and delivery of information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations.

**Competencies: Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:**

- CRDN 3.1 Perform the Nutrition Care Process and use standardized nutrition language for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of settings.
- CRDN 3.2 Conduct nutrition focused physical exams.
- CRDN 3.3 Demonstrate effective communications skills for clinical and customer services in a variety of formats and settings.
- CRDN 3.4 Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience.
- CRDN 3.5 Develop nutrition education materials that are culturally and age appropriate and designed for the literacy level of the audience.
- CRDN 3.6 Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change.
- CRDN 3.7 Develop and deliver products, programs or services that promote consumer health, wellness and lifestyle management.
- CRDN 3.8 Deliver respectful, science-based answers to client questions concerning emerging trends.
- CRDN 3.9 Coordinate procurement, production, distribution and service of goods and services, demonstrating and promoting responsible use of resources.
- CRDN 3.10 Develop and evaluate recipes, formulas and menus for acceptability and affordability that accommodate the cultural diversity and health needs of various populations, groups and individuals.

4. Domain 4. Practice Management and Use of Resources: Strategic application of principles of management and systems in the provision of services to individuals and organizations.

**Competencies: Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:**

- CRDN 4.1 Participate in management of human resources.
- CRDN 4.2 Perform management functions related to safety, security and sanitation that affect employees, customers, patients, facilities and food.
- CRDN 4.3 Conduct clinical and customer service quality management activities.
- CRDN 4.4 Apply current nutrition informatics to develop, store, retrieve and disseminate information and data.
- CRDN 4.5 Analyze quality, financial and productivity data for use in planning.
- CRDN 4.6 Propose and use procedures as appropriate to the practice setting to promote sustainability, reduce waste and protect the environment.
- CRDN 4.7 Conduct feasibility studies for products, programs or services with consideration of costs and benefits.
- CRDN 4.8 Develop a plan to provide or develop a product, program or service that includes a budget, staffing needs, equipment and supplies.

CRDN 4.9 Explain the process for coding and billing for nutrition and dietetics services to obtain reimbursement from public or private payers, fee-for-service and value-based payment systems.

CRDN 4.10 Analyze risk in nutrition and dietetics practice.

b. The curriculum must include at least one program-defined concentration that builds on the core competencies and develops additional depth necessary for future proficiency in a particular area. The concentration must include at least two program specific competencies with associated learning activities.

**5.3** The program's curriculum must provide learning activities to attain the breadth and depth of the core competencies and program-defined concentration competencies. Syllabi for courses taught within the academic unit and supervised practice rotation descriptions must include these learning activities with the associated CRDN.

a. Learning activities must prepare interns for professional practice with patients/clients with various conditions, including, but not limited to overweight and obesity; endocrine disorders; cancer; malnutrition and 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 older adults.

c. Learning activities must use a variety of educational approaches necessary for delivery of curriculum content, to meet learner needs and to facilitate learning objectives.

### **Standard 7: 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. 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, and research or other activities leading to professional growth in the advancement of their profession.**

**7.1** The program must provide evidence that qualified and appropriately credentialed faculty and preceptors are sufficient to ensure implementation of the program's curriculum and the achievement of the program objectives and student learning outcomes.

**7.2** The requirements for program faculty and preceptors must include:

a. Program faculty (faculty within the academic unit), including the program director, must meet the sponsoring organization's criteria for appointment and have sufficient education in a field related to the subject in which they teach or must meet the institution's policy for education and/or equivalent experience.

b. Preceptors must have the education and experience needed to provide appropriate guidance for supervised practice experiences. Preceptors must be licensed, as appropriate to meet state and federal regulations, or credentialed, as needed, for the area in which they are supervising interns.

c. Program faculty, including the program director, and preceptors must show evidence of continued competence appropriate to their teaching or precepting responsibilities through professional work, graduate education, continuing education, scholarship/research or other activities leading to professional growth in the advancement of their profession.

d. The program must have a process for the periodic review, including input from interns, of the effectiveness of faculty and preceptors.

**7.3** The orientation and training requirements for program faculty and preceptor must include:

a. New program faculty members, instructors, preceptors and teaching assistants must be provided orientation to the mission, goals, objectives and educational philosophy of the nutrition and dietetics program.

b. Program faculty members, instructors, teaching assistants and preceptors must receive feedback, and training as needed, based on program evaluation and feedback from interns.

c. Program faculty members, instructors, teaching assistants and preceptors must receive training on the ACEND Standards and required knowledge and competencies.

**Standard 8: Supervised Practice/Experiential Learning Sites**

**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 sites are able to provide supervised practice learning experiences compatible with the competencies that interns are expected to achieve.**

**8.1** Supervised practice site requirements:

a. The institution/organization must establish policies that outline the issuance and maintenance of written affiliation agreements and the selection criteria, evaluation process and timeline for evaluation of adequacy and appropriateness of supervised practice facilities.

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

c. Agreements must be signed by individuals with appropriate institutionally-assigned authority in advance of placing students.

d. The institution/organization must clarify in its policies any situation where affiliation agreements are not required (such as a site being part of the program's organization).

## **Course Sequence**

### **Food Service/Administration (1<sup>st</sup>) 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 (2<sup>nd</sup>) 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, **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 **respectful** of preceptors' willingness to precept and the **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 **REWARD** you for your time and to make the precepting of UCA dietetic interns as efficient and seamless as possible, **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 an 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 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: <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: ***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 and 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 completed
- Identify areas that require additional development
- When feasible, set aside time on Fridays for this meeting. This will allow the intern to use feedback to prepare for the following week.

## **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:

<b>Confronting (try to use)</b>	<b>Criticizing (try to avoid)</b>
<p>This is based on observable behaviors and facts:</p> <p><b>Problem</b>--focuses on the problem, with concrete, objective facts.</p> <p><b>Specific</b>--identifies specifically what should occur or change starting with the most recent event.</p> <p><b>Change</b>--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.</p> <p><b>Relationship</b>--focuses on improving performance, increasing commitment, and building a positive work relationship.</p>	<p>This is based on feelings and perceptions:</p> <p><b>Person</b>--focuses on the person and her attitude or traits.</p> <p><b>General</b>--uses general statements that may magnify the problem by using words like never, always, continually and so on.</p> <p><b>Blame</b>--establishes blame, making the intern feel guilty and focuses on the past.</p> <p><b>Self-centers</b> on the needs of the preceptor and sometimes involves venting own anger or frustration.</p>

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

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

## 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

- DI Director, Nina Roofe: [nroofe@uca.edu](mailto:nroofe@uca.edu)
- Website: <http://uca.edu/facs/programs/dietetic-internship/preceptors/>
- UCA DI Preceptor Handbook (on website)
- CDR: <http://www.cdrnet.org/> and <https://www.cdrnet.org/cpeu-credit-for-preceptors>
- CPEUs awarded for precepting: 1-25 contact hours = 1 CPEU; 26-50 contact hours = 2 CPEUs; 51 and greater contact hours = 3 CPEUs
- Community of AR preceptors
- Rotation manuals (foodservice, community, clinical, research)