

Master of Science Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy Preceptor Handbook



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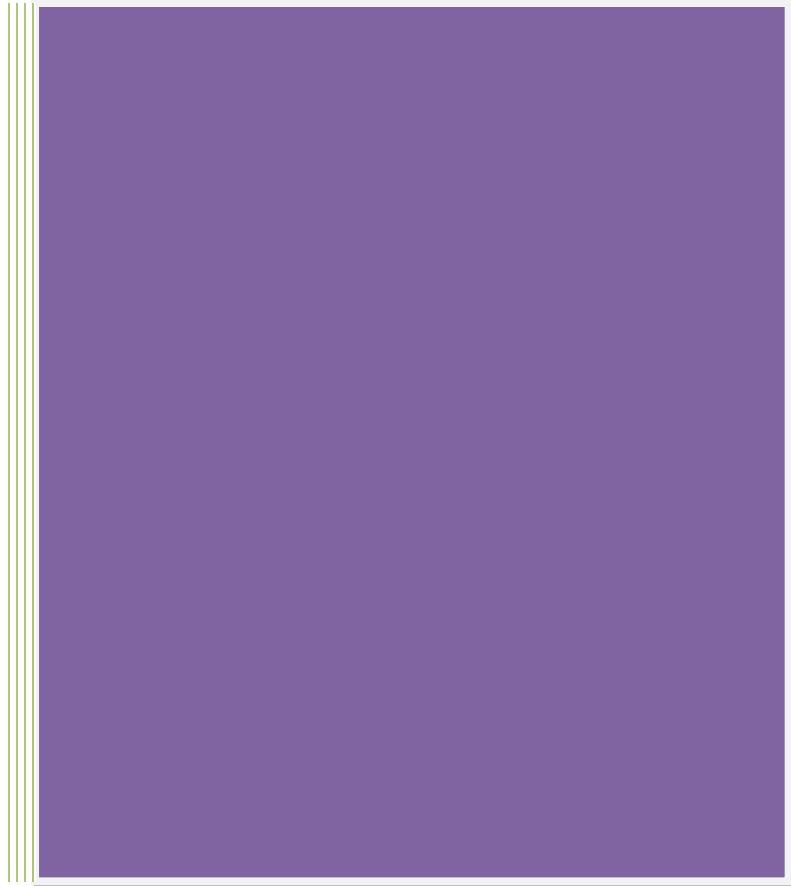


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Introduction to the Preceptor Handbook

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 Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy Program. According to data from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), 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) has approved UCA's Program as a Future Education Model so there are significant changes in evaluation and experiences.

I want to express my most sincere appreciation to you for agreeing to precept students in the UCA supervised experiential learning program. As a preceptor, you are an essential and integral component of dietetics education and that there would be no supervised experiential learning 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 students. My goal is to have you actively participate in the continuous quality improvement process surrounding the UCA program in Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy. Your input regarding the students, scheduling, rotations, assignments, etc. is essential to the success of this program. 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, alandry@uca.edu, or phone, 501.852.0230.

As the Director and sole program 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 dietetics and nutrition therapy program evaluations, dietetic student selection committee, and the UCA Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy program advisory board which meets annually. Please contact me if you are interested in serving in an advisory capacity.

Alicia Landry, PhD, RDN, LDN, SNS

Introduction to Supervised Experiential Learning

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 experiential learning 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 experiential learning program represents a crucial step in developing the graduate student from “beginner” to “entry-level” competence. Competence is defined as the quality or state of having requisite or adequate ability or qualities. The supervised experiential learning program provides an opportunity for dietetic students to experiential learning 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 experiential learning.

The supervised experiential learning program offers an environment in which dietetic students can learn new skills and apply classroom education. Supervised experiential learning will help the student attain competencies and learning outcomes appropriate to the entry level dietetics practitioner. Essentially, students will be learning what you, the preceptor and professional, do on a daily basis as part of your job. Upon culmination of each rotation, students should have developed the skills necessary for them to perform your job in a satisfactory manner. It is not expected that students 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 students 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 student. In addition, they play an integral role in the planning and modification of the curriculum and supervised experiential learning 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 students 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, students are able to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Resource developer** – By guiding students to the appropriate materials (current research, protocols, practice guidelines, manuals, etc.) and other professionals that will assist students in their practice and professional development, preceptors serve as resource developers.
- **Assessors of learning** – Preceptors serve as front-line evaluators of students' learning and competence as they progress through the supervised experiential learning rotation.

General Benefits of Precepting Dietetic Students

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 students. Through such projects, students learn and develop competency while making real-life contributions to the supervised experiential learning site. Students can perform certain tasks for you such as conduct in-services or quality improvement which you may have difficulty completing during your usual schedule. Students 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 students often feel a greater sense of value and contribution to the team.
- **Alternative perspectives through fresh eyes** – Students may bring new perspectives to a facility. Often through a student's questions and a preceptor's expertise, best practices are identified. Students can help define what you do and how you do it. Students' questions and your explanations often result in clearer ways of doing things.
- **Challenge and variety** – Students 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. Students increase your learning since they bring new knowledge and perspectives to your institution. Students can solve problems creatively (e.g., assign students 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. Students can assist with journal clubs to help update staff on the latest information in dietetic practice.

Benefits of Precepting UCA Dietetic Students

- Open invitation to UCA College of Health & Behavioral Sciences webinars and additional professional development opportunities
- On-site access to UCA Torreyson Library
- CPEUs awarded for precepting

Progression of Learning

The supervised experiential learning process is designed to build student skills and entry-level competency upon the existing foundation of didactic knowledge. Throughout each supervised experiential learning rotation, the goal is to gradually increase the level of:

- Responsibility
- Proficiency
- Independence
- Competence

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

Mission

The mission of the University of Central Arkansas Graduate Program in Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy, is to maintain a high-quality program in dietetics, dedicated to **assisting graduates with development of needed skills for the varied roles of the dietitian in today's society**, and which ultimately culminates in preparation of entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists and therefore registration eligibility with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR). Graduates will be provided opportunities to **develop expertise in nutrition therapy, community nutrition, and foodservice systems management, while developing professional attitudes, maturity, and competent professional behavior.**

The program goals include the following:

Program Goal 1: Graduates of the University of Central Arkansas Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy will be competent entry-level dietetic practitioners.

Program Objectives for Goal 1:

- 1.1 At least 80% of program graduates complete program/degree requirements within 1.875 years (150% of the program length).
- 1.2 80 percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.
- 1.3 The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.
- 1.4 Of graduates who seek employment, 80% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.

Program Goal 2: Graduates of the University of Central Arkansas Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy will be prepared for a broad range of career opportunities in the field of dietetics.

Program Objectives for Goal 2:

- 2.1 Of graduates who seek employment, 80 percent are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.
- 2.2 Over a 5-year period, 80% of employers will rate program graduates at "satisfactory" or above.
- 2.3 Over a 5-year period, 80% of program graduates will rate their preparation for entry-level employment at "satisfactory" or above.

Program

The UCA Dietetics and Nutrition Therapy program is a fifteen-month Future Graduate Program, concurrent with the UCA academic calendar, beginning mid-May and concluding mid-August of the next year. The Program consists of 1040 hours of supervised experiential learning, a five-day orientation, and a final exit week. The Program provides full time supervised experiential learning hours over 15 months to meet the hour requirement.

Students will be given ~3 weeks of designated vacation during the practice components depending on the UCA academic calendar. The weeks of vacation are subject to change but generally as follows:

- **Memorial Day**

- **Labor Day**
- **Thanksgiving Break**
- **Winter Break**
- **Spring Break**
- **Personal Day** – this unscheduled personal day is to be reserved for a time of need (illness, bereavement, etc.) (1 day)

Responsibilities of Preceptors, Students, and the Program Director

Responsibilities of Preceptors

- Conduct a thorough orientation to the supervised experiential learning setting.
- Meet with the student(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 student(s) in setting appropriate goals and a schedule for completion of competencies during the rotation.
- Provide assistance and supervision as needed.
- Evaluate each student's progress and provide timely formative and summative feedback. Let students and the Director know if they are not meeting expectations early in the rotation so they can learn and adjust. Student evaluation results should not be a surprise at the end of a rotation.
- Complete required supervised experiential learning documentation in a timely manner.
- Model evidence-based practice, professional behavior, time management, and ethical practice.
- Communicate each student's progress and any issues regarding the student(s) or the supervised experiential learning experience in general to the Director.

Responsibilities of Students

- Prepare for and participate in all supervised experiential learning 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 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 experiential learning experience while acknowledging that many skills will take years to develop and require experience far beyond the program.
- 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 experiential learning 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 students.
- Monitor progress of students through the competency evaluation forms.
- Address any concerns raised by either preceptors or students in a timely manner.
- Conduct regular site visits for on-site students.
- 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 a student is unhappy with any aspect of the program, he or she is encouraged to make an appointment with the Program Director. Any problem with the supervised experiential learning facility should first be brought to the preceptor's attention by the student in a professional and thoughtful manner. If the student feels that the problem with the facility is not being solved by the preceptor, the problem should be brought to the Program 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.

Phone: 800/877-1600, ext. 5400

Mail: 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL, 60606-6995

Preceptor Training

Preceptors will be provided electronic access to rotation-specific forms and information. Materials will be available a minimum of one week prior to the start date and be maintained throughout the year. Preceptors are also required to have annual training on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. If training on these topics is conducted by the facility in which they are employed, evidence of completion of the training will suffice. If no training on this topic is available by the employer, UCA will provide the training through the UCA employee training learning management system.

[Preceptor Training Course](#)

ACEND offers a free, on-line Dietetics Preceptor Training 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. This complimentary training awards participants with 8 CPEUs and includes seven modules:

1. Role as Preceptor
2. Planning and Organizing Experiences
3. All Students are Not the Same
4. Assessing Student Learning
5. Communicating Effectively
6. Managing Time
7. Keeping Current in Dietetics Education and Credentialing

Through these modules, several activities, self-assessments, tools and resources are included such as developing a goal-based learning plan, solving case-based scenarios and completing a communication checklist.

Objectives of the course include:

- Describe the characteristics of effective preceptors
- Identify three key responsibilities of students and three expectations preceptors should have of students

- Describe four methods to monitor and assess student development of the ACEND® competencies and learning outcomes
- Identify three sources of information for keeping current in dietetics education, credentialing and practice

Preceptor's Checklist for Student Orientation to Facility

The following are some important topics to include in the orientation process for students 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 student should bring to rotations (i.e. calculator, lab coat, binder containing essential documents)
- Student 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 Student Evaluations

The entire process of 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 students will be provided with a **Rotation Competency Evaluation Form** for each rotation prior to the start of each rotation. Preceptors and students should familiarize themselves with all of these documents prior to the start of each rotation.
2. 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 student's work and rate their competency.

Planning and Feedback

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

- Set goals and plan for the following week
- Allow for student 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 student 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 students 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 students work with you. These forms should be completed and reviewed with the student. The information on the form is a learning tool for the student as well as a method to determine that the student has achieved the desired state of competency. When you review the completed form with the student, the student 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 student 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 student's:

Technical Skills

- Specifically indicate how the student has improved.
- Direct student's attention to the cues.
- If demonstrating, leave part for the student to do.
- Clarify why acceptable work is not perfect.
- Praise specific aspects rather than generalities.
- Direct student's attention to relevant cues and make sure he/she can detect them.
- Prompt student to help give answers to your questions.
- Determine if student 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 student's personality or personal characteristics.
- Give student the benefit of the doubt that he/she is not trying to get away with something.
- If you make a mistake with an student, acknowledge the error.
- Ask for student's evaluation of their own work before evaluating, to determine if student 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 student do the required task?
- Encourage the student to present alternatives and new ideas about procedures and processes including patient care.
- Attend to the student's questions and concerns so that he/she feels respected.
- Show concern for an student who is having trouble and appears anxious.

In the program we consider various types of evaluation:

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

Evaluation should be based on reasonable and known performance criteria. Students cannot read the preceptors' minds, nor do they have the same experienced perspective of what constitutes good dietetic practice. Preceptors need to listen to students to evaluate their own communication skills. Students may fail at performance because expectations were not clearly defined, assumptions were made without students' knowledge of them, or because students had not observed a previous example. Remember that what is obvious to you as a seasoned professional is often not obvious to an student.

Evaluation should be continuous in everything students do. Often it is done informally. Positive reinforcement can build students' 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 students to believe their work is okay. They won't know they should change unless someone tells them. Students who are evaluated and corrected early on, generally, have fewer difficulties in performance later.

In making suggestions for improvements to students, make sure the students 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 students' confidence, to reinforce desirable performance, or to inform students about behaviors that need to be changed in the future. It is also used by the program director to evaluate future experience needs of students to successfully complete their program. Realistically, final evaluation may also be used to prevent unqualified students from progressing beyond their skill and knowledge level. This is

one of the hurdles that students must successfully pass to qualify for writing the registration examination

Criteria for the final evaluation of performance should be clear and known to students. Evaluation criteria should be given to students at the beginning of a rotation so that they know what is expected. The results of students' 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 students a good idea of how they will be evaluated in the end. Students 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 students 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 student 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 student:

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

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

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

CRITERIA FOR FEEDBACK

Examples

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

1. DESCRIBE the student's behavior RATHER THAN JUDGE the student.
 - "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 STUDENT.
 - "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 STUDENT 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 STUDENT SOLICITS FEEDBACK.
 - This is evidenced by the student 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 Student 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 Students

Although the UCA Program Director and Selection Committee screen and select students carefully, match them cautiously with each other and with preceptors, and select only the very best, we do occasionally have a difficult student. Please respond to the difficult student 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 students. Include the UCA Program Director as necessary as you work with the difficult student, we must have documentation at all levels if we are expected to take any action. Sometimes the action will include simply placing the student in another location---perhaps there is a personality conflict. Other times the action will include terminating the student'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 student (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 students.
7. Solicit information from the students:
 - 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 students:

- 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 experiential learning 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 student as a way for the student to meet a competency)

Outstanding Preceptor Awards

Each August at the Graduation Reception, three preceptors will be recognized for their contribution to the UCA Program. Students 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.

Faculty and Staff

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Preceptor Resources

- Director, Alicia Landry: alandry@uca.edu
- Website: <http://uca.edu/nfs/programs/dietetic-internship/preceptors/>
- UCA DI Preceptor Handbook (on website)