Structure of the Program

The UNLV Dietetic Internship (DI) is administered through the UNLV Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition Sciences. Both the DPD and Dietetic Internship are designed to provide well-trained dietetics professionals for the growing Southern Nevada region.

The DI is designed to prepare interns to meet entry-level skills expected of the Registered Dietitian. In 2009 the UNLV DI received Initial Accreditation from The Accreditation Council for Education and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition of Dietetics. The contact information for ACEND is listed below:

The Accreditation Council for Education and Dietetics
Academy of Nutrition of Dietetics
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60606-6995
Phone: (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400
E-mail: education@eatright.org
Website: http://www.eatright.org/acend

Interns must apply to the UNLV Graduate School as a non-degree seeking graduate student and will receive a total of 6 graduate credits. There is no application fee required for this process. Interns must be enrolled in KIN 796 (Supervised Practice: Community Nutrition), KIN 797 (Supervised Practice: Foodservice Management), and KIN 798 (Supervised Practice: Clinical Nutrition). In addition, the DI consists of 1200 contact hours (40 hours per week for seven months). An additional 15-20 hours per week will be required for preparation of the rotations and to complete assignments in fulfillment of the graduate courses. Upon successful completion of the DI, students will be eligible to take the National Registration Examination for Dietitians.

The program currently accepts 20 interns per year, 10 in each seven-month period. Of the 1200 hours, 680 are devoted to clinical experience, 240 to food service management, 240 to community experience, and 40 for an elective experience that is developed by the intern and approved by the preceptor. Below is an overview of the rotations with a sample schedule included. The community experience will take place at various sites in the Las Vegas community. The preceptor for the community rotation is Barbara Paulsen, M.S., R.D. For the food service and clinical rotations, interns will be placed at one of the several participating hospitals: Sunrise Hospital, St. Rose Hospital, Summerlin Hospital, Desert Springs Hospital,
Southern Hills, Moutainview, Spring Valley, or University Medial Center. Below is an overview of the rotations with a sample schedule included.

Community Nutrition Overview

The goal of the Community Component of the Dietetic Internship is to provide the intern with the opportunity to observe and gain information from a variety of diverse community nutrition programs as well as a more intensive work experience in one or two aspects of community nutrition programming. This format will provide each intern with the opportunity to observe the diversity within community nutrition and to actively participate in nutrition program development and implementation. Topics pertinent to all areas of practice such as professional development and the Code of Ethics will be covered in detail during the Community Rotation. The Community Nutrition Component of the dietetic internship will provide 240 hours of supervised practice. The time will be allotted as follows:

- 160 hours In Depth Learning divided between 2 learning sites
- 72 hours Multiple Site Overview Experiences
- 8 hours Classroom experience and presentation

In Depth Single Learning Experiences

Each intern will spend either 3 weeks (120 hours) at a single site followed by 1 week (40 hours) at a different site or 4 weeks (160 hours) divided equally between 2 sites. The In Depth Site Learning Experience provides the interns with the opportunity to participate in the development and implementation of nutrition programming to a greater degree than what is provided in a short 16-32 hour observation visit.

At each site the intern will learn about the mission and vision of the agency/organization, funding source, target audiences served and major program areas within the agency/organization. (S)he will also work on specific aspects of nutrition programming within the agency/organization. At one of the two In Depth sites each intern will also work on a specific project that culminates in a written and oral report. The oral reports will be scheduled for presentation in an upper division nutrition class; Community Nutrition in the Fall Semester and Food and Nutrition Law and Policy or Senior Seminar in the Spring Semester. This will provide an audience for the interns and an opportunity for undergraduate students to observe one component of the internship program. Depending on the particular project in which the intern is involved (s)he may participate in the needs assessment/planning component of a program under development, implementation of a new or existing program, program marketing or a program evaluation. The specific learning experience for each intern will depend on the particular agency/organization at which the intern spends his/her rotation and the programming of that agency/organization.

The following agencies/organizations have agreed to participate in this internship component.

- Las Vegas Children's Heart Center
- United Health Care
Multiple Site Overview Experiences

Each intern will spend 16-32 hours at individual sites providing nutrition services in the community. Learning experiences at these short-term sites will include observation and participation in short-term activities such as coding data, developing a marketing brochure, group presentations, or a resource review. The intern will also obtain information on mission, funding, target audience and major programs at each site (s)he visits. The goal of these rotations is to provide the intern with a broad perspective of the variety of nutrition programming in the community and the duties performed by an RD at these various sites. The following agencies/organizations have agreed to participate in this component.

- American Heart Association
- Children's Heart Center
- Dairy Council of Utah/Nevada
- Dairy Council of Utah/Nevada Lifesteps Program
- Harrah's Health & Wellness Center
- Headstart
- HealthWrite
- Nevada Cancer Institute
- Nevada Department of Education, Child Nutrition Services
- Nevada Early Intervention
- Nevada Health Centers, WIC
- Catholic Charities WIC
- Southern Nevada Health District, Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion & Environmental Health Units
- Barbara Greenspun Center
- Three Square
- United Healthcare
- University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension
- Walgreen's Optioncare Home Health
- Nestle Nutrition
- Clark County School Food Services
- UNLV Student Recreation & Wellness Center

(Some agencies/organizations have agreed to provide both short-term and in depth experiences for interns. Assignments will be made such that an agency/organization providing an in depth experience for an intern will not provide a short term experience for that same intern.)
Classroom Experience and Reports

The interns will spend 8-10 hours participating in formal class sessions during their community rotation plus time spent giving their oral presentation to undergraduate students. Classes/meetings will be held on a regular basis throughout the internship experience. Part of the class time will be devoted to presentations by preceptors and guest speakers designed to provide additional background and knowledge to interns on specific nutrition and health topics. A portion of the class time will be for interns to present case studies and/or project reports.

Competencies

Activities assigned at the In Depth Learning Sites and through classroom assignments will enable the interns to meet most, if not all, of the required competencies related to community programming and operation. Because of the unique nature of the activities performed by specific organizations/facilities or specific RD's, these sites have been asked to specifically provide activities relative to meet the ACEND competencies.

Food and Beverage Management Rotation Overview

Each student will spend 6 weeks in the food service management rotation. Individual projects will vary and will be assigned by the preceptor at the start of the rotation. During the six-week period, interns will learn and acquire skills in the following areas:
Production (assessing inventory, ordering, deliveries/receiving, storage, production sheets, food production, entree preparation with patient survey).
Tray line supervision for breakfast and dinner shifts (introduction, times, temperatures, scheduling, and presentation).
Cafeteria, physician's lounge, and catering (operations, scheduling, presentation, cashier duties, food safety, cleanliness).
Diet Office/Diet Technician duties/supervision.

Clinical Rotation Overview

Each intern will spend 17 weeks in the clinical rotation. During the seventeen-week period, interns will learn and acquire skills in the following areas:

- Orientation to facility, diet office, and modified menu planning.
- Nutritional Screening and Assessment.
- The Nutrition Care Process and Medical Nutrition Therapy for various disease states (i.e. Outpatient Care, Weight Management, Diabetes Mellitus, Gestational Diabetes Mellitus, Cardiopulmonary Diseases, Gastrointestinal Diseases, Oncology, Orthopedics and Surgery, Rehabilitation and Neurology, Intensive Care and Nutrition Support, Renal Disease, Pediatrics, Trauma).
Elective Experience

Each intern will develop and idea for a one-week elective experience and will obtain approval from the DI Director and preceptor to complete this rotation.

Program Completion Requirements

Students must successfully complete all of the competencies and student learning outcomes as part of the DI curriculum. CLICK HERE FOR A LIST OF COMPETENCIES/STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES. Interns are evaluated informally throughout each rotation and formally at the end of each rotation. Based upon the feedback received from the preceptor, the DI director evaluates interns and decides if the intern has passed the rotation. The DI director will be in close contact with each preceptor throughout the year.

Evaluation of Interns

Interns are evaluated regularly and frequently during their seven-month rotation. Informal evaluations take place in discussions between the DI director and preceptors, and preceptors and interns on a regular basis. Formal, written evaluations will be competed at the end of each rotation, with input from the intern. Interns will be evaluated based on the specified competencies considered essential for an entry-level dietitian set by the CADE accreditation Standards. Professional behavior and attitude will also be evaluated and documented in the evaluation form. Another evaluation will be completed by each intern to provide the DI Director with input as to the effectiveness of the program.

In the event of unsatisfactory performance during any of the rotations, the preceptor and DI Director consult to determine the format of a redirection plan to allow the intern to achieve the competencies. Inability to accomplish that plan may result in dismissal from the program.

Program Admission and Selection of Interns

Successful applicants must meet the following minimum admission standards:

- A baccalaureate or advanced degree from a regionally accredited four-year college or university.
- Minimum overall GPA of 2.75 (4.00 = A) for the bachelor's degree or a minimum 3.00 GPA (4.00 = A) for the last two years of study.
- Didactic Program in Dietetics Verification Statement or Intent to Complete Form.

If accepted into the DI Program, students must complete an application to the UNLV Graduate College to become a non-degree seeking student. This application can be found at http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/prospective/non-degree/become_a_student/.

THIS STEP IS ONLY FOR ACCEPTED INTERNS. DO NOT COMPLETE THIS STEP AS PART OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS.
There is a $30 fee to apply.

The DI program director along with Nutrition Sciences faculty members do the first screening based on GPA, work experience, volunteer experience, and letters of reference. The top 10-15 applicants will then be selected for interviews. Interviews may be done in person or by phone.

**Student Responsibilities (To Allow Supervised Practice Experience at the Sites)**

**Students who are accepted into the program must:**

- Provide evidence of a criminal background investigation. If you have any criminal background, the hospital/facility will determine if the student is granted learning privileges at that site. If the hospital/facility does not allow a student in their facility, the intern will be dismissed from the program. If selected for the internship, the DI Program Director will inform you of the process. If selected for the internship, the DI Program Director will inform you of the process.

- Provide certification of training in Hospital and Laboratory Safety (Certification must be consistent with U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention guidelines). A web-based course will be offered through UNLV and needs to be taken prior to the start of the internship.

- Provide evidence of medical insurance coverage, and evidence of last physical examination, including proof of current status of the following:
  - Statement from physician confirming that the intern is healthy and able to participate in the DI.
  - Negative result to an 8-panel drug screen. Selected interns can have this test performed locally at Quest Diagnostics. The DI Program Director will give interns the laboratory request slip.
  - Tuberculosis signs & symptoms questionnaire:
    - Two-step TB skin test (TST) for students with no history or a positive TST who have not been tested in the last 12 months;
    - One step TST test for students with proof of a negative TST test in the last 12 months;
    - Chest radiograph for students with proof of past positive TST.
  - Please contact the Southern Nevada Health District at (702) 385-1291 or [http://www.cchd.org](http://www.cchd.org), or call the UNLV Student Health Center at (702) 895-3370 for information or to schedule the test.
  - Rubella: documented receipt of one vaccination after 1st birthday, serology or born before 1957
  - Rubeola: documented receipt of two vaccinations on or after first birthday, serology or born before 1957
  - Chicken Pox: Physician documented history or documented receipt of vaccination
  - Hepatitis B: vaccines, titer, or statement of refusal
  - Tetanus and diphtheria: inoculation within ten years
  - Fingerprinting
  - CPR Certification
Please note: these requirements may change. Interns selected for the program will be notified of all requirements prior to the start of the program.

**Assessment of Prior Learning**

Completion of this program will not result in a graduate degree. Prior learning experience or earned credits from a graduate program cannot waive the requirement for registration into KIN 796 (Supervised Practice: Community Dietetics), KIN 797 (Supervised Practice: Food Service Management), and KIN 798 (Supervised Practice: Clinical Dietetics). Registration in these courses is required in order to have access to university services.

Prior learning from employment will not be considered as a partial waiver of course credits or supervised practice hours. Interns with prior experience may be given assignments or projects that are appropriate for their background and that are most useful for the intern and the institution.

**Policy for Issuing the Final Verification Statement**

If the program completion requirements are met, the DI Director will issue the final Verification Statement and will follow the procedures established by the Commission on Dietetic Registration for submitting and verifying eligibility for the RD examination. Successful program completion includes completing the minimum required contact hours, earning at least a satisfactory rating on all competencies and student learning outcomes, completing an adequate learning portfolio, and completion of the CDR exit packet (Name/Address Verification Form, RDE Misuse form, and Transcript Degree/Confirmation Release Form).

**Statement of Responsibility**

Each intern assumes all risks and is solely responsible for any injury or loss sustained while traveling to or participating in the UNLV DI, operated by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Allied Health Sciences, at their rotation sites unless such injury or loss arises solely out of the sites gross negligence or willful misconduct.