

**Marshall University**  
**Dietetic Internship**



***Preceptor Handbook***  
***2017-2018***

**Department of Dietetics**

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## Welcome and Overview

We would like to thank each of you for your willingness to serve as a preceptor for Marshall University's on-site or distance internship program. You are helping prepare our next generation of professionals and we are extremely grateful for your time and participation. This handbook is a means of providing beneficial information that will assist you in your role as a preceptor, but please know that we are always available to answer any questions you may have.

Below, you will find an overview of Marshall University Dietetic Internship (MUDI) programs. Marshall is located in Huntington, West Virginia and the internships are housed within the Department of Dietetics in the College of Health Professions. Our internships are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995  
312.899.0040 ext. 5400  
<http://www.eatright.org>

The MUDI is a 10-month program that combines a minimum of 1200 supervised practice hours and 21 hours of graduate coursework. Many of our interns take additional classes or thesis hours to complete a master's degree in Dietetics. Currently the MS is optional; however, in the future it will become mandatory for interns as a master's degree will be required for entry-level practice in 2024.

Fall coursework includes:

- DTS 670 Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy I
- DTS 690 Research Applications in Dietetics
- DTS 675 DI Practicum I

Spring coursework includes:

- DTS 679 Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy II
- DTS 673 Administrative Dietetics
- DTS 676 DI Practicum II

Summer coursework includes:

- DTS 677 DI Practicum III

Additional coursework available to dietetic interns within the Department include Cardiovascular Nutrition, Sports Nutrition, and Diabetes and Nutrition Management. Electives taken outside the department depend on student interests, but typically include courses in counseling, psychology, exercise physiology, public health, or health care administration.

For a description of the Dietetic Internship Courses, please consult the Graduate Catalog corresponding to the appropriate dietetic internship year:

<http://www.marshall.edu/catalog/graduate-catalogs/>

**Program Mission:**

The mission of the MUDI is to develop successful, entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists who are able to promote optimal nutrition and health to individuals, groups, and communities by providing a variety of nutrition experiences in urban and rural areas.

**Program Goals:**

1. Provide graduates with comprehensive and diverse experiences in community nutrition, foodservice management, long term care, and medical nutrition therapy.
2. Prepare graduates who are competent entry-level practitioners.
3. Prepare graduates to successfully pass the Registration Examination for Dietitians.
4. Prepare graduates for successful completion of an advanced degree.

**Location:**

The on-site dietetic internship is based in Huntington, WV. Rotations for these interns will be planned and scheduled by the dietetic internship director and include facilities within a 50-mile radius. Conversely, the distance internship will include interns (and preceptors) participating in rotations nation-wide. Interns are responsible for finding preceptors in the geographic region in which they live and scheduling rotations with the approval of the distance dietetic internship coordinator.

**Supervised Practice Rotations:**

Supervised practice rotations will be completed in the following areas:

- Medical Nutrition Therapy
- Community Nutrition and Public Health
- School Nutrition Education
- Foodservice Management
- Professional Development

**Vacations, Holidays, and Absence:**

Supervised practice rotations may be scheduled during University holidays in order to attain the appropriate number of hours to complete accreditation requirements. The 2016 – 2017 onsite internship's schedule includes the following dates that are inconsistent with the University's calendar:

- *Orientation:* August 10 - 19, 2016
- *Thanksgiving Break:* November 23 - 27, 2016
- *Winter Break:* December 17, 2016 – January 3, 2017
- *Memorial Day:* May 29, 2017 – Depending on the assigned Clinical II facility, interns will either be scheduled to work this day or an alternative day will be assigned by the preceptor.
- *Internship Completion Date:* Friday, June 30, 2017

Distance internship schedules will vary; however, graduate coursework will follow the University's calendar.

Rotation days missed as a result of any excused absence, (i.e. appointment, illness, death in family) will be rescheduled for completion at another time determined by the preceptor and intern.

An extended absence due to illness, or other extenuating circumstance, will be handled on an individual basis involving the intern and Internship Director/Coordinator. Rotations will be rescheduled based on availability of preceptors, but may not be identical to what was originally planned.

## **Role of Preceptor**

Your role as a preceptor is to share your knowledge, skills, and expertise through supervised practice experiences and prepare interns to be entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists. Preceptors provide thoughtful and constructive feedback to support intern learning and self-sufficiency. They serve as role models and openly share professional knowledge while listening and learning from interns.

Interns have a foundational knowledge base in nutrition and dietetics, but may have limited experience in working with patients/client and in leadership roles. An internship enables the intern to put didactic knowledge to practice and develop critical thinking skills in the “real-world” setting. This practice time builds professional confidence and prepares the interns for a career in dietetics.

## **Tips for Preceptors**

### **Before your intern arrives:**

- Your intern will be in contact with you no later than a week before they are scheduled to arrive at your facility to receive instructions for their first day with you
- Be sure to let the intern know where to park, the dress code for your facility (lab coat needed?), where to meet you on the first day, and any information/resources they need to bring with them

### **First Day/Week Tips:**

- Establish ground rules
- Define and discuss expectations
- Discuss competencies to be met during the rotation and work with interns to develop a plan for completion
- Explain work norms at your facility
- Introduce intern to staff they will be working with
- Provide a tour of your facility
- Ensure that interns knows where to park, the dress code, and work times
- Identify your role within your organization
- Ask your intern about his or her strengths and interests. You may find they have talents or skills that can benefit you and your organization
- Ask your intern about his or her expectations for the rotation
- Have a plan for the first day
- Tell your intern about yourself

- If possible, provide a tentative schedule for the rotation
- Discuss your preferred method to co-signing documentation, if needed

### **Adult Learning Strategies:**

- **DR FIRM**
  - **D: Demonstration, presentation, and problem solving**
  - **R: Rehearsal**
  - **F: Feedback and Correction**
  - **I: Independent Practice**
  - **R: Review**
  - **M: Motivate to persevere**

### **Demonstration:**

- Let interns observe early in the rotation and discuss the steps you have taken to complete a task
- Show interns what you do on a day-to-day basis. In the clinical setting, this includes details of calculating nutrient needs, providing education, and providing recommendations, as these will vary from facility to facility
- Stick to the important points and help the intern develop problem-solving skills
- Describe your short cuts, if any, or tips and why you use them

### **Rehearsal:**

- Have the intern role play your job. Ask them: if this was your patient/client, what would you do? Or, if you were leading this meeting, what would you say?
- Evaluate by observing performance
- Explain how much time should be spent on certain tasks to improve time-management skills

### **Feedback and Correction:**

- Feedback should be open, corrective, and specific
- Show empathy
- Emphasize thoroughness
- Errors should be corrected and interns should repeat tasks as appropriate
- Be specific
- Ask interns questions that patients or staff might ask
- Ask an intern to describe how he or she determined nutrient needs or how they assessed patient understanding after providing a diet instruction

### **Independent Practice:**

- Time to let them go, although interns should feel free to ask questions when necessary
- Set deadlines for specific tasks. Set up times during the day to check in with you

### **Review:**

- Observe or have interns demonstrate an assigned tasks
- Highlight both strengths and weaknesses

- Have interns rehearse as needed

**Motivate:**

- Praise intern for tasks that were completed correctly
- Encourage learning at your facility by creating a positive work environment
- When appropriate, allow the intern to complete tasks independently
- Relay positive comments you have heard about the intern from other healthcare practitioners

Preceptors who are energetic and enthusiastic stimulate student learning and interest. When needed, work with the intern to find answers to their questions. You will learn from interns as they will learn from you.

**Successful Preceptors:**

- Create a positive learning environment
- Are accessible
- Provide feedback and evaluate student performance (both positive and constructive)
- Guide interns while promoting problem-solving skills
- Have a positive attitude
- Demonstrate professional ethics and work within the scope of practice for RDN's
- Create an atmosphere for open, clear communication
- View interns positively
- Challenge interns to perform
- Remember that interns are preparing for entry-level work
- Provide direction to interns, as needed
- Have reasonable expectations
- Are open to feedback, just as your interns will be
- Ask for the intern's ideas

**Intern Needs/ Expectations:**

During supervised practice, interns will be expected to put classroom knowledge into practice and further develop their critical thinking skills. The intern's expectations of the rotation should be discussed on the first day. Most interns are enthusiastic and want to learn all they can. If an opportunity arises to observe or participate in a swallowing evaluation, surgery, wound care rounds, staff meeting, job interview, etc., keep the intern in mind and ask if he or she can participate. Be supportive and encourage your intern to ask questions so he or she can make the most of the experience.

**Responsibilities of the Intern:**

- Prepare for and participate in all supervised practice activities
- Assume responsibility for their own learning and be self-directed learners
- Demonstrate professional attributes: timeliness, organization, respect, a positive attitude, motivation, open-mindedness, flexibility, and patience
- Communicate regularly with preceptors regarding expectations, progress, questions, and difficulties

- Be respectful of preceptors' willingness to precept
- Expect a challenging supervised practice experience and recognize that skills will take years to develop
- Manage time efficiently
- Ask for guidance when needed
- Be open to feedback
- Build relationships

## Handling Difficult Situations

### Difficult situation may arise if:

- Students have inadequate knowledge prior to the rotation
- Skill deficiencies are present (not able to translate information learned in class to the work setting)
- Personality difficulties are present (poor communication skills)
- Situation difficulties are present (inability to cope with certain populations due to personal reasons- ex. a student has a family member with Alzheimer's and they are unable to handle working with this population)

### Suggestions for dealing with student problems:

- Frequent, on-going evaluation
- Specify the issues of concern when discussing problems with the intern
- Problems should be identified and dealt with as early as possible. Bad habits are reinforced through repetition so it is important to correct them quickly
- Rules and expectations need to be communicated clearly
- Talk to student about feelings that make them apprehensive or hesitant
- Describe the student's behavior rather than judge it
- Provide specific feedback, not general
- Time your feedback appropriately; it should be provided shortly after completion of a task
- Check for understanding to ensure clear communication
- Inform the internship director (onsite) or coordinator (distance) of any communication when dealing with intern problems

## Evaluation

The most important and challenging role for the preceptor is evaluating the intern's performance. Evaluation should be on-going and frequent to help modify skills and behaviors if needed.

### Tips for evaluation:

- Evaluation is part of the learning process and can help build an intern's confidence in professional practice



- Midpoint evaluations, completed in rotations lasting four weeks or longer, provide feedback on areas for improvement
- Final evaluations, completed at the end of rotations, detail an intern's strengths and areas that may need improvement as additional rotations are completed
- Results of the final evaluation should NEVER come as a complete surprise since feedback is provided throughout the rotation
- Evaluations can be helpful to the preceptor if they are used to identify areas of strength or areas for improvement in rotation activities

### **Evaluation Documentation:**

The MUDI uses the online reporting system, E\*Value, for documentation of weekly reports and intern evaluations.

**Weekly Reports** - Weekly reports are completed by the intern and include a summation of accomplished activities and learning outcomes, days and hours worked, and other pertinent information. Once the intern completes his or her weekly report, it is electronically sent to the preceptor for verification. The preceptor is responsible for reading the report and verifying the information provided reflects what was accomplished during that week.

**Midpoint Evaluations** - Rotations lasting four weeks or longer require a midpoint evaluation to identify any potential areas for improvement prior to the final evaluation. Preceptors are, however, encouraged to provide steady feedback throughout the rotation to allow for redirection and reinforcement as needed. Preceptors will receive an e-mail link 3 days before the mid-point date to complete this evaluation. Be sure to discuss the evaluation with the intern before submitting. Once the preceptor submits the evaluation, the intern and internship director/coordinator will be able to view it.

**Final Evaluations** – No matter the length, interns will be evaluated at the end of all rotations. Preceptors will receive an e-mail link 3 days before the completion date, providing access to the evaluation form. Once completed, preceptors should discuss the evaluation with the intern to identify strengths and areas which may need improvement or additional practice. Once the preceptor submits the evaluation, the intern and internship director/coordinator will be able to view it on E\*Value.

In the event an intern receives a score of less than “meets expectations” on an evaluation item, some type of remedial work is required. The student, preceptor, and internship director/coordinator will discuss and agree upon remediation requirements. These will vary according to the situation. Requirements for remediation will be placed in the intern's file and upon completion of remedial work, the preceptor and director/coordinator will determine the intern's ability to continue rotations as assigned.

## ACEND Knowledge Requirements

Dietetic internship competencies and suggested activities to meet these knowledge requirements will be posted separately under the preceptor link of Marshall's website. Understandably, each facility will offer different learning experiences; therefore, the activities proposed to meet competencies are suggestions and may be met in other ways as well.

### More about Precepting

- The preceptor tab on the Department of Dietetics' website contains useful information and we recommend utilizing this resource as needed. Additionally, more detailed information about both dietetic internships can be found at <https://www.marshall.edu/dietetics/>.
- The Commission on Dietetics Registration (CDR) offers a free on-line preceptor training program. This learning module offers 8 CPEU's upon successful completion of the program. It is not necessary for participants to be members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in order to take this course. The course is titled Dietetics Preceptor Training Program and can be found at <https://www.cdrnet.org/news/online-dietetics-preceptor-training-course-free-of-charge>. This training is very beneficial and we encourage you to complete it when you have the chance.
- Networking with other preceptors at local, state, and national meetings is helpful in sharing ideas and strategies that are beneficial to the process.

## **Preceptor Checklist for Intern Orientation to Facility - Example (Cedar Crest College)**

\_\_\_ How intern obtains an appropriate ID (if needed)

Note: All interns will have a Marshall University Dietetic Intern badge obtained during orientation

\_\_\_ Required facility orientation (dress code, HIPPA, Universal Precautions)

\_\_\_ Required documentation needed (TB results, background check, drug screen)

\_\_\_ What, if any, office, locker, or other space the intern may use

\_\_\_ Parking restrictions

\_\_\_ How intern will access phones, pages, computers, etc.

\_\_\_ Meal policy

\_\_\_ Mission and goals of the facility

\_\_\_ Facility policies and code of conduct

\_\_\_ Departmental policies and procedures

\_\_\_ Introductions to other staff

\_\_\_ Share dietitian job description

\_\_\_ Typical routine/ schedule

\_\_\_ Resources intern may need or want to access (manuals, education materials)

\_\_\_ Items the intern should bring to rotations (lab coat, calculator, laptop)

## Relevant Experience and Project Ideas

Projects and experiences should be appropriate to provide learning opportunities for interns. Below are a few examples that may be helpful.

### Foodservice Management Rotations

- Quality improvement project
  - Waste management
  - Temperature Audits
  - Trayline Efficiency
- Environmental/ Green Project
  - Reducing the use of throw away containers
  - Taste-testing new food items
    - Evaluate the product
    - Complete nutrition facts for new recipes
- Special Cafeteria Menu or Theme Meal
  - Develop a meal that will be served in the cafeteria
    - This will include marketing the meal, budget costs, serving the meal, and evaluating the meal
    - Interns can also provide educational handouts or recipes to be provided with the meal
    - Examples: heart healthy foods, healthy holiday foods, healthy comfort foods, strengthen your gut with pro- and prebiotic foods, eating well with diabetes, healthy picnics

### Clinical Rotations

- Billing and coding regulations
- Insurance requirements
- Nutrition Care Plan
  - Assessment, Nutrition Diagnosis, Intervention, Monitor/Evaluate
  - Appropriate documentation
- Participate in rounds and discharge planning meetings
- Introducing interns to other departments (ex. wound care, speech pathology, pharmacy) to see the broad scope of clinical care
- Observe surgeries as available and desired

### Community Rotations

- Review a grant or proposal for community nutrition or a wellness related event that addresses a problem identified by the site
  - This could be an established grant
- Group presentations
  - Cooking demos
  - Family dinner nights
  - Employee in-services
- Develop and present nutrition education classes
  - One or a series
  - Identify needs
  - Prepare presentation, including education material
  - Conduct the presentation
  - Self-reflection and evaluation of presentation

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