

Nutritional Science Program
College of Nursing and Health Professions
Arkansas State University

The Nutritional Science Program at Arkansas State University provides for the achievement of knowledge and performance requirements for entry-level dietitians through integration of classroom instruction with a minimum of 1200 hours of supervised practice. The supervised practice experiences occur in food service, community and clinical settings.

Students accepted into the program are expected to:

1. Perform duties within the Scope of Dietetics Practice while observing the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics. See copy of the Code of Ethics at the end of this document.
2. Complete successfully the Core Knowledge & Competencies for the RD, which follow this list of Essential Functions.
3. Represent and promote Arkansas State University in a professional, positive manner.

Essential Functions

Essential functions, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to the intellectual, physical, ethical and emotional abilities necessary to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the program for professional practice. These skills and abilities include observation, communication, motor, intellectual and behavioral/social attributes.

Observation: Students must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and tactile sensation, enhanced by the functional sense of smell.

Communication: Students must be able to utilize appropriate verbal (in English), nonverbal and written communication with patients, families, preceptors, members of the healthcare team, and others. Communication includes not only speech, but listening, reading, writing, interpreting information from a variety of sources, and computer literacy. Appropriate communication may also rely on the students' ability to make a correct judgment in seeking assistance and consultation in a timely matter. Recognition and respect for the ethnic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic needs of the patient and family are also part of effective communication skills.

Motor: Students must have sufficient motor skills to gain access to patients in a variety of care settings. Students should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other assessment maneuvers. Students must be able to sit, bend, reach and/or walk and stand for most of the day. Students should have no restrictions in the following: climbing, stooping, kneeling, reaching, standing, walking, pushing (carts), lifting (20 pounds or less), carrying (20 pounds or less), fingering (writing, typing), feeling (particularly

with fingertips, i.e. for skin turgor), talking, hearing, and seeing. Frequent interaction via computer, interpretation of visual presentation on screen, and repetitive hand movements are also required.

Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities: These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Problem-solving and critical thinking are important skills demanded of dietitians and require all of these intellectual abilities. Students must have the intellectual ability to comprehend and recall large amounts of didactic information under time constraints and apply this information to the practice of dietetics and food service management.

Behavioral and Social Attributes: Students must possess the emotional health required for full use of their intellectual abilities, to exercise good judgment and efficiently complete all responsibilities of the dietetics program. The development of mature, sensitive, effective and professional relationships with patients and members of the healthcare team is essential. Students must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the healthcare environment. Compassion and concern for others are also desirable personal qualities.

Ten professional behaviors important in the work setting are assessed throughout the dietetics program, especially in supervised practice experiences. These ten behaviors fall under the category of behavioral and social attributes: commitment to learning, interpersonal skills, communication skills, effective use of time and resources, use of constructive feedback, problem-solving, professionalism, responsibility, critical thinking and stress management.

Certain disabilities can interfere with a student's ability to complete the Nutritional Science program and acquire the essential functions necessary for the practice of dietetics. A student who feels he/she has such a disability is required to register with Disability Services office at <http://www.astate.edu/a/disability/> or 870-972-3964. Reasonable accommodations can be made to compensate for some but not all, limitations. Students should be aware that those limitations that interfere with patient care, safety, or require the use of an intermediary may be incompatible with independent professional practice.

During dietetics program orientation students are required to acknowledge that they are able to fulfill the essential functions stated here by signing a form located in the Dietetics Student Handbook.

References

Abilities and Skills for the Undergraduate Nursing Major, School of Nursing, Arkansas State University. Retrieved from

<http://www.astate.edu/college/conhp/departments/nursing/word-files/student%20handbook.2014-15.pdf>

Abilities and Skills of the Physical Therapist Assistant, College of Nursing and Health Professions, Arkansas State University. Retrieved from

<http://www.astate.edu/info/academics/degrees/degree-details.dot?mid=c9bc5250-4190-49e3-962f-e9e756774ee9>

Coordinated Program in Dietetics Essential Program-Related Functions, College of Allied Health Sciences, University of Cincinnati. Retrieved from

<http://www.caahs.uc.edu/departments/nutrition/programs/coordinated/about.aspx>

Essential Functions, Physical Therapy Program, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina. Retrieved from

<http://www.sph.sc.edu/dpt/pdf/Essential%20Functions%2004-03.pdf>

Protecting Students with Disabilities. Retrieved from

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics

Fundamental Principles

The dietetics practitioner:

1. Conducts himself/herself with honesty, integrity, and fairness.
2. Supports and promotes high standards of professional practice; accepts the obligation to protect clients, the public, and the profession by upholding the code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics; reports perceived violations of the Code through the processes established by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and its credentialing agency, CDR.

Responsibilities to the Public

3. Considers the health, safety, and welfare of the public at all times.
4. Complies with all laws and regulations applicable or related to the profession or to the practitioner's ethical obligations as described in this Code.
5. Provides professional services with objectivity and with respect for the unique needs and values of individuals.
6. Does not engage in false or misleading practices or communications.
7. Withdraws from professional practice when unable to fulfill his or her professional duties and responsibilities to clients and others.

Responsibilities to Clients

8. Recognizes and exercises professional judgment within the limits of his or her qualifications and collaborates with others, seeks counsel, or makes referrals as appropriate.
9. Treats clients and patients with respect and consideration.
10. Protects confidential information and makes full disclosure about any limitations on his or her ability to guarantee full confidentiality.
11. In dealing with and providing services to clients and others, complies with the same principles set forth above in principles 3 – 7.

Responsibilities to the Profession

12. Practices dietetics based on evidence-based principles and current information.
13. Presents reliable and substantiated information and interprets controversial information without personal bias, recognizing that legitimate differences of opinion exist.
14. Assumes a life-long responsibility and accountability for personal competence in practice, consistent with accepted professional standards, continually striving to increase professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice.
15. Is alert to the occurrence of a real or potential conflict of interest and takes appropriate action whenever a conflict arises.
16. Permits the use of his or her name for the purpose of certifying that dietetics services have been rendered only if he or she has provided or supervised the provision of those services.
17. Accurately presents professional qualifications and credentials.
18. Does not invite, accept, or offer gifts, monetary incentives, or other considerations that affect or reasonably give an appearance of affecting his/her professional judgment.

Responsibilities to Colleagues and Other Professionals

19. Demonstrates respect for the values, rights, knowledge, and skills of colleagues and other professionals.

Core Knowledge & Competencies for the RD

1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice: integration of scientific information and research into practice

Knowledge

KRD 1.1 The curriculum must reflect the scientific basis of the dietetics profession and must include research methodology, interpretation of research literature and integration of research principles into evidence based practice.

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

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

CRD 1.2 Apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature (such as the Academy's Evidence Analysis Library and Evidence-based Nutrition Practice Guidelines, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, National Guideline Clearinghouse Web sites) in the nutrition care process and model and other areas of dietetics practice

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

CRD 1.4 Evaluate emerging research for application in dietetics practice

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

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

Knowledge

KRD 2.1 The curriculum must include opportunities to develop a variety of communication skills sufficient for entry into pre-professional practice.

KRD 2.2 The curriculum must provide principles and techniques of effective counseling methods.

KRD 2.3 The curriculum must include opportunities to understand governance of dietetics practice, such as the Scope of Dietetics Practice and the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics; and interdisciplinary relationships in various practice settings.

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

CRD 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 Dietetics Practice and Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics

CRD 2.2 Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications

CRD 2.3 Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience

CRD 2.4 Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change

CRD 2.5 Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings

CRD 2.6 Assign patient care activities to DTRs and/or support personnel as appropriate.

CRD 2.7 Refer clients and patients to other professionals and services when needs are beyond individual scope of practice

CRD 2.8 Apply leadership skills to achieve desired outcomes

CRD 2.9 Participate in professional and community organizations (see tip, below)

CRD 2.10 Establish collaborative relationships with other health professionals and support personnel to deliver effective nutrition services.

CRD 2.11 Demonstrate professional attributes within various organizational cultures

CRD 2.12 Perform self-assessment, develop goals and objectives and prepare a draft portfolio for professional development as defined by the Commission on Dietetic Registration

CRD 2.13 Demonstrate negotiation skills

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

Knowledge

KRD 3.1 The curriculum must reflect the principles of Medical Nutrition Therapy and the practice of the nutrition care process, including principles and methods of assessment, diagnosis, identification and implementation of interventions and strategies for monitoring and evaluation.

KRD 3.2 The curriculum must include the role of environment, food, nutrition and lifestyle choices in health promotion and disease prevention.

KRD 3.3 The curriculum must include education and behavior change theories and techniques.

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

CRD 3.1 Perform the Nutrition Care Process (a through e below) and use standardized nutrition language for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of settings

a. Assess the nutritional status of individuals, groups and populations in a variety of settings where nutrition care is or can be delivered

b. Diagnose nutrition problems and create problem, etiology, signs and symptoms (PES) statements

c. Plan and implement nutrition interventions to include prioritizing the nutrition diagnosis, formulating a nutrition prescription, establishing goals and selecting and managing intervention

d. Monitor and evaluate problems, etiologies, signs, symptoms and the impact of interventions on the nutrition diagnosis

e. Complete documentation that follows professional guidelines, guidelines required by health care systems and guidelines required by the practice setting

CRD 3.2 Demonstrate effective communications skills for clinical and customer services in a variety of formats.

CRD 3.3 Develop and deliver products, programs or services that promote consumer health, wellness and lifestyle management

CRD 3.4 Deliver respectful, science-based answers to consumer questions concerning emerging trends

CRD 3.5 Coordinate procurement, production, distribution and service of goods and services.

CRD 3.6 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. Practice Management and Use of Resources: strategic application of principles of management and systems in the provision of services to individuals and organizations

Knowledge

KRD 4.1 The curriculum must include management and business theories and principles required to deliver programs and services.

KRD 4.2 The curriculum must include content related to quality management of food and nutrition services.

KRD 4.3 The curriculum must include the fundamentals of public policy, including the legislative and regulatory basis of dietetics practice.

KRD 4.4 The curriculum must include content related to health care systems.

KRD 4.5 The curriculum must include content related to coding and billing of dietetics/nutrition services to obtain reimbursement for services from public or private insurers

Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are able to:

CRD 4.1 Participate in management of human resources

CRD 4.2 Perform management functions related to safety, security and sanitation that affect employees, customers, patients, facilities and food

CRD 4.3 Participate in public policy activities, including both legislative and regulatory initiatives

CRD 4.4 Conduct clinical and customer service quality management activities

CRD 4.5 Use current informatics technology to develop, store, retrieve and disseminate information and data

CRD 4.6 Analyze quality, financial or productivity data and develop a plan for intervention

CRD 4.7 Propose and use procedures as appropriate to the practice setting to reduce waste and protect the environment

CRD 4.8 Conduct feasibility studies for products, programs or services with consideration of costs and benefits.

CRD 4.9 Analyze financial data to assess utilization of resources

CRD 4.10 Develop a plan to provide or develop a product, program or service that includes a budget, staffing needs, equipment and supplies

CRD 4.11 Code and bill for dietetic/nutrition services to obtain reimbursement from public or private insurers.

5. Support Knowledge: knowledge underlying the requirements specified above.

KRD 5.1 The food and food systems foundation of the dietetics profession must be evident in the curriculum.

Course content must include the principles of food science and food systems, techniques of food preparation and application to the development, modification and evaluation of recipes, menus and food products acceptable to diverse groups.

KRD 5.2 The physical and biological science foundation of the dietetics profession must be evident in the curriculum. Course content must include organic chemistry, biochemistry, physiology, genetics, microbiology, pharmacology, statistics, nutrient metabolism and nutrition across the lifespan.

KRD 5.3 The behavioral and social science foundation of the dietetics profession must be evident in the curriculum. Course content must include concepts of human behavior and diversity, such as psychology, sociology or anthropology.

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (2012).
Accreditation Standards for Dietitian Education Programs Leading to the RD Credential.