

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) For the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD)

I. Didactic Program in Dietetics

II. Becoming a Registered Dietitian (RD)

III. Dietetic Internship (DI)

I. Didactic Program in Dietetics

- **What is the DPD?**

- The Didactic Program of Dietetics (DPD) is the set of course work in the Nutrition and Dietetics Option of the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Science that fulfills the academic requirements for a student to become a Registered Dietitian (RD). The DPD at CSUN is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, 800/877-1600. All students who meet the program requirements receive a Verification Statement. This verifies that they have successfully completed the DPD. If a student is considering this major or has recently declared this as her/his major, she/he needs to start with attending a DPD orientation, which is planned and presented by the DPD Director.

- **Do I need to attend a DPD Orientation?**

Yes. Attendance at a DPD orientation is required in order to be in the DPD. You only need to attend once, and a list of Orientation dates is available on the [DPD website](#). You may also call the FCS department at (818) 677-3051 to inquire about the orientation. Each session will cover how to become an RD, the list of AND-approved courses you need, and a flowchart for taking courses. Then you can fill out the required paperwork and get advised.

- **I am interested in applying to your program and would like to meet with one of the faculty advisors/counselors in Nutrition/Dietetics. Who should I contact?**

Before you meet with one of the advisors in the program you should:

a) Attend a Dietetics Program Orientation session at CSUN. Dates are posted the DPD website under "advisement orientation."

b) Talk with a counselor in our College's Student Services Center. You can contact them at: <http://www.csun.edu/hhd/sscadvisement.html>

- **Do all students in Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Science need to complete the DPD?**

CSUN offers DPD program and Food Science Program. The DPD is only for students who wish to become registered dietitians, and the goal is to prepare students academically to enter a Dietetic Internship.

- **What can I do with a Nutrition and Dietetics Bachelor's degree?**

Nutrition and Dietetics experts are needed at the corporate level, in smaller businesses, hospitals and nursing homes, pharmaceutical companies, public health agencies, and government agencies, but most of these places require the applicant to be a registered Dietitian (RD).

- **Why is advisement required every semester?**

Since not all classes are offered every semester, and many classes have prerequisites, we want to be sure that all students are on the right track. All DPD students must attend a Group Advisement session each semester to prepare for the next. A registration hold is placed on students registration that will not be cleared until student attends one of the four or five group advisement sessions. Dates for advisement sessions will be posted at the FCS Dept. office by Mid semester.

- Who is my advisor?**
 If you need further advisement about classes after attending a Group Advisement session, you may speak with one of the FCS faculty members assigned alphabetically to students in the department. Please check with the FCS office at (818) 677-3051 to find out which faculty member is assigned to you. For questions about the DPD program, please contact the DPD Director, Dr. Setareh Torabian, at setareh.torabian@csun.edu or 818-677-2842.
- Do I need to take all the classes on the flowchart for DPD Verification?**
 Yes, all courses must be completed in order to finish the DPD. Only the bolded courses must be completed at CSUN.
- May I take any of the prerequisites at a community college?**
Graduate students (MS/DPD) **MUST** take science courses (100-200 levels) at a community college prior to admission to CSUN. To make sure the courses at a community college articulate with CSUN, please check www.assist.org. However, *undergrad* students who are seeking a BS degree from CSUN may or may not take these science courses at a community college. These science courses are: Chem 103/L, Chem 104/L, Chem 235/L, Bio 101/L, Bio 215/L, Bio 281, FCS 207. The list of articulated courses can be found at www.assist.org.
- I have had some science courses already. How do I know if they transfer?**
 There is a great website (<http://www.assist.org/web-assist/welcome.html>). You can navigate through that and find out which courses articulate with CSUN. Articulated courses can be easily transferred but for non-articulated courses, course evaluation should be done by the DPD director after you attend the DPD orientation and complete your transcript evaluation packet with all your course description and syllabus.
- Where can I find the complete list of DPD classes or flow chart?**
 You can go to www.csun.edu/~dpd. Under “The course of study” section flow chart of our course work is shown.
- Where are my FCS and DPD files kept? How can I take a look at them?**
 Your **FCS** file can be found in the FCS office (SQ141). You may present your CSUN ID to the front desk to check it out. It contains your Group Advisement notes and other documents.

 Your **DPD** file is kept in the DPD Director’s office (SQ 200K), and you can come in during office hours to look at it. Please check with the FCS office for current office hours. It is recommended that you make photocopies of all the forms you give the DPD Director so that you have your own copies as well.
- If I took Chemistry 101/L and 102/L, and I want them to count for Chemistry 103/L and 104/L, would that be possible?**
 The DPD director has to make sure that all the topics covered in chemistry 103/L and 104/L are the ones that are covered in chemistry 101/L and 102/L. If acceptable, you have to submit a course substitution form. The following table contains some of the classes *taken at CSUN* that can be substituted for DPD courses:

The following courses	Substituted for
Health 337	FCS 207

CHEM 101/L	CHEM 103/L
CHEM 102/L	CHEM 104/L
BIOL 106/L and BIO 107/L (must take both)	BIOL 101/L
BIO 315 and BIO 315L	BIO 215/L
CHEM 333/L and CHEM 334/L (must take both)	CHEM 235/L
CHEM 464 and CHEM 464L	CHEM 365/L
CHEM 461/L and CHEM 462/L (must take both)	CHEM 365/L

- **I'm from another country, but would like to become an RD in the United States. What do I do?"**

If your education/training were completed outside of the United States and its territories, the first step is to have your academic degree(s) validated as equivalent to the bachelor's or master's degree by an AND-approved, non-profit agency that performs this specialized service. [Click here](#) for information regarding international collaboration. Then, you need to attend one of the DPD orientation meetings for all admitted and prospective students (schedule is on the website <http://hhd.csun.edu/dpd/>) and complete the **Self/Transcript-Evaluation Packet** before individual advisement can take place. This is called **Primary Transcript Evaluation session**

In your Transcript Evaluation Packet you have to have:

1. Complete Transcript Evaluation form which can be found at our website: www.csun.edu/~dpd
2. Check the articulation website at www.assist.org for articulated course
3. An unofficial transcript (showing when you took the course), **and**
4. A description of the non-articulated course from the college/university catalog or website (so it is easy to make the comparison and determination)
5. A check or money order payable to CSUN for the amount of \$25

Note: All course descriptions should be photocopied from the college's catalog or printed directly from the webpage. Copy/pasted descriptions will not be accepted. Also, do not send any emails with a link, expecting the DPD Director to take the time to click, find, print, and evaluate.

- **What is Primary Transcript Evaluation?**

To determine which Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) requirements you may already have fulfilled at other colleges/ universities as well as which courses you still need to take to meet the DPD requirements, your transcripts need to be evaluated by the DPD Director.

Procedures:

1. Students who have received their degree(s) from FOREIGN universities must first have their transcripts validated as to their equivalency to degree(s) from an accredited university in the United States or its territories. Agencies are available in a number of U.S. cities and their addresses can be obtained from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) (800/877-1600) or at www.eatright.org. You should request a coursework area analysis when you have your evaluation done by this agency. Please submit an official copy of the Foreign Equivalency statement with official copies of all of your college/ university transcripts to the DPD Director as explained in #2 below.

2. If you have had your education within the United States or its territories OR if you have completed step #1, then you need to have the DPD Director evaluate your transcripts. This means attending DPD Orientation and preparing the transcript evaluation packet.

- **Will a class from another school substitute for a class on the flowchart? Who can I speak to?**

If the class was taken at a public California college or university, you may use www.assist.org to see what CSUN course it is articulated for. If the class was taken elsewhere, the DPD Director will need to evaluate the class after you attend the DPD orientation and prepare your transcript evaluation packet for the DPD director review.

- **Can I take SED 525HEC as an undergraduate student?**

Yes. You need to take it because it is a prerequisite for FCS 408 (Community Nutrition). This class does not require graduate status and has no prerequisite.

- **Math 140 and FCS 380 which one should I take if I'm a graduate student completing DPD program?**

Not all graduate students need to take an undergraduate statistics course, nor do they need to take FCS 380:

- I. Graduate students who are completing the DPD and the M.S. already have to take 681-682, so they shouldn't need to take an additional statistics course.
- II. Only graduate students that are in the DPD but not completing the M.S., that have not taken any statistics course before, or have not been an FCS major for a BS would need to take either Math 140 or FCS 380.
- III. Math 140 is not required for DPD undergrad students

- **If a class I took at another college and the laboratory section is not appearing on my Degree Progress Report (DPR), what should I do?**

Do not panic! There should be no problem getting the lab counted as long as it shows on the transcript of the articulated institution you are transferring from. Your advisor may need to fill out a course substitution form in order to have the lab counted. This process may take time, so you may need to get a permission number for a desired course for which the lab is a prerequisite.

- **If I am transferring from another university to CSUN and I already took some of the “must be taken” courses (bolded on the flowchart), can I still have them counted?**

Unfortunately, no. You will have to repeat those courses if you wish to be verified here at CSUN. We have this policy in order to control the quality of our program.

- **What are the differences between internships offered by the Marilyn Magaram Center and the Dietetic Internship (DI)?**

The DI is a requirement for becoming an RD, while the Marilyn Magaram Center internships are voluntary opportunities for current FCS students in Nutrition and Dietetics or Food Science to get involved. A list of internships can be found [here](#).

- **What is a Final Transcript Evaluation and when do I have to do it?**

You should attend a Transcript Evaluation Information session the year before you plan to begin the Dietetic Internship (DI). There is only one or two meetings per semester. For example, if you will finish the DPD program in Fall 2016 or Spring 2017, and will be applying in February for internships in 2017, you should attend a Fall 2016 session. This means you may have an additional semester remaining when you attend.

This meeting will inform you about the DI application process, and how to schedule a meeting with the DPD Director to evaluate your coursework and transcripts for the last time before you apply to the DI. You need to have this Transcript Evaluation in order to receive a Declaration of Intent or Verification Statement.

- **What is a Declaration of Intent?**
A Declaration of Intent is needed to apply for the Dietetic Internship (DI) if you have not yet completed all your DPD coursework, and therefore cannot receive a Verification Statement. It states which classes are still needed to complete the program, and indicates your intent to take them. This form is provided to you by the DPD Director once you have gone through a Transcript Evaluation. You may apply for the DI with one semester remaining if you will complete the DPD the summer before the DI begins.
- **What is a Verification Statement?**
A signed verification statement documents completion of the DPD program. This form can be signed only by current program directors of ACEND-accredited or approved DPD programs. For students earning their baccalaureate degree, a verification statement is issued when the student has completed all the DPD courses and provides an official transcript showing conferring of a degree. For students who have previously completed a baccalaureate degree, a verification statement will be given upon completion of all DPD courses as well.
- **Who can sign verification statements?**
Verification statements should be signed only by current program director of ACEND-accredited or approved dietetics education programs.
- **When are verification statements signed and disseminated?**
For students earning their baccalaureate degree, verification statements are issued when the student completes all DPD courses and provides an official transcript showing conferring of a degree. For students who have previously completed a baccalaureate degree (Post-Bac), a verification statement can be given upon completion of all DPD courses as well.
- **Is the CSUN DPD accredited?**
The Didactic Program in Dietetics at the California State University, Northridge is currently granted accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, 312-899-0400 ext.5400.
- **Should I join the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)?**
It is highly recommended that you join as a [Student Member](#) for a \$50 annual fee. Membership includes many benefits, including the monthly *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, eligibility for scholarships, networking opportunities, free membership in the California Dietetic Association, discounts on books and conferences, access the Evidence Analysis Library, and email newsletters.

II. Becoming a Registered Dietitian (RD)

- **What do I need to do to become a registered dietitian (RD)?**
 1. Complete a baccalaureate degree or DPD program at an AND-approved DPD program.
 2. Complete a Dietetic Internship.
 3. Pass the Registration exam.

Complete your DPD program – A student who wishes to become an RD must complete an ADA-approved DPD program from a regionally accredited, degree-granting college or university (such as the CSUN-DPD) which provide for achievement of the "Knowledge Requirements for Entry-Level Dietitians". Here at CSUN, the knowledge and major degree requirements are met by completing the Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Science Option in the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences. A signed **verification statement** will be issued to the student after completion of all the DPD courses.

Demonstrate competence through a dietetic internship (DI) - Following completion of the DPD coursework and attainment of a degree, students must also demonstrate competence in the "Performance Requirements for Entry-Level Dietitians" through a DI. At CSUN, the department-supported DI program consists of a planned and supervised rotation through medical and health-related facilities (21-24 credits of practicum) plus 18 credit hours of graduate coursework. Acceptance to a DI is competitive; grade point averages, work experience and communication skills are some the factors considered.

Pass the registration examination - This exam is given by the Commission of Dietetics Registration (CDR).

- **What is the difference between an RD, a dietetic technician, registered (DTR), and a nutritionist?**

The RD and DTR credentials can only be used by dietetics practitioners authorized by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Individuals with these credentials have completed specific academic and supervised practice requirements, successfully completed a national registration exam, and maintained requirements for recertification. Students may take the DTR exam without an internship after completing the DPD, so working as a DTR to gain experience is an option if you are not accepted into a Dietetic Internship. For more information on DTRs, click [here](#).

All RDs and DTRs study nutrition and its applications to food and health. Some RDs or DTRs call themselves nutritionists. However, the definition and requirements for the term "nutritionist" vary. Some states have licensure laws that define the scope of practice for someone using the designation nutritionist.

- **I have a Bachelor's degree in a field other than Nutrition and Dietetics, but I am interested in becoming a registered dietitian. What steps should I take to apply to your program?**

You won't need a second bachelor's degree, but may enroll as a graduate student in FCS, and will be expected to complete courses specified by the AND. You will follow the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). You will find information about the program and any prerequisites you need to fulfill in these two websites:

- a. <http://www.csun.edu/~dpd/>
- b. <http://hhd.csun.edu/csundi/index.htm>

Note: You are also required to attend an orientation session for the program. You'll find the schedule on the Didactic Program in Dietetics website under "advisement orientation." (These take place only during the academic school year, and not in the summer).

- **I'm from another country, but I would like to become an RD in the US. What do I do?**

Individuals who completed their education and training outside of the US, or received credentials in another country, may be eligible to become credentialed RDs in the US. Individuals who have completed the education and credentialing requirements in one country may be eligible for another country's credentialing examination if the two countries have entered into a "reciprocity" agreement to allow this.

If reciprocity does not apply, you must have your academic degree validated as equivalent to the bachelor's or master's degree conferred by a US regionally-accredited college or university and complete a CADE-approved supervised practice requirement to establish your eligibility to sit for the exam. It is important to note that all individuals who establish registration eligibility — whether under the provisions of a reciprocity agreement or through the combination of a validated academic degree and supervised practice program — must successfully write the Registration Examination for Dietitians to earn the RD credential. For further information, visit this [website](#).

- **When do I take the Registration exam? How can I prepare for it?**

The ACEND Registration exam should be taken within a year of receiving your Authorization to Test following the end of your Dietetic Internship. You should start preparing for it early by reviewing DPD course materials. Once you are closer to the time to take your exam, you may order preparation materials from various companies or attend a preparation course if one is available. For more information, visit the [CDR website](#).

II. Dietetic Internship (DI)

- **What is a DI?**

A DI consists of a planned and supervised rotation through medical and health-related facilities in the areas of clinical nutrition, community nutrition, and food service. Successful completion is required in order to become as RD. To read more about the CSUN DI program, click here.

- **What does it take to get into a DI?**

The DI application process is very competitive! You will need a high GPA, excellent recommendation letters, nutrition-related work or volunteer experience, leadership experience, and a strong personal statement. Some DIs require the GRE, so do your research and plan ahead.

While you are doing the DPD, you are encouraged to:

- Obtain a job or volunteer position in a hospital
- Get involved in [SDFSA](#)
- Find unique job or volunteer experiences
- Get involved in professional organizations (attend [LAD](#) events)
- Keep good relationships with your professors, managers, or other dietetic professionals
- Meet with professionals

- **Where can I find out more about DI programs?**

Make sure you look at the RED BOOK in the department office with all the current internship programs. Additional internship programs are available on the [AND website](#). Even before you start planning on applying, you should attend SDFSA's Dietetic Internship Symposium, held each semester at CSUN, to hear directors speak about their programs. [All Access Internships](#) is also a great resource for applications.

- **Where can I find more information about the CSUN Dietetic Internship?**

Please visit the [website](#). For more information, contact the DI Director, Dr. Annette Besnilian, at AnnetteB@csun.edu or (818) 677-2841.

- **What is D&D Digital?**

Most Internships use the online *Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS)* to receive applicant's application packet. For submitting the application online students have to open an account with D&D Digital. D&D Digital features a website for applicants and DI directors participating in the computer matching process. Please visit the [AND website](#) to find information on this. Students can now register online at <http://www.dnndigital.com> and enter contact information, Dietetic internship preferences, and pay the \$50.00 fee with a credit card on or before the deadline.

- **What is Matching System?**

Most Dietetic internships (DI) select applicants for appointments through a computer matching process. This process occurs twice a year, in the Spring (appointments are made in April) and in the Fall (appointments are made in November). Usually deadline for Spring appointments is around Mid-February and for Fall appointments is around Mid-September each year.

- **If I completed my baccalaureate degree and DPD program, and went through the DI, but was unable to complete the internship, what should I do?**

If this happened recently, you can get re-verified for DPD. If this happened more than 10 years ago, depending on the DI program you are applying for, you might need to repeat almost all or some of the 300 and 400 level courses (not the lower division pre-requisites) and go through the Dietetic Internship again.