

# Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) is the accrediting agency for education programs preparing students for careers as registered dietitian nutritionists or nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered.

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## News and Updates

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### **New Dietetics Application Process for ACEND® Supervised Practice Programs (DIs, CPs, GPs)**

During its January 2024 meeting, the ACEND® Board voted to discontinue the dietetics application match (through D&D Digital) and approved the proposed application process for dietetics. The new process follows the typical university and most other health professions' admissions process. The following are highlights of these decisions:

1. The computer matching process provided by D&D Digital will be discontinued. Spring 2024 marks the last cycle that will use the computer matching process. The revised Dietetics Application Process will launch for the Fall 2024 cycle.
2. With the discontinuation of the match, the ACEND® Board also voted to discontinue the Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) for unmatched DPD-Verification Statement (VS) applicants only. This decision does not impact the ISPP option for those applicants who hold a doctoral degree. The doctoral degree ISPPs can continue. A separate communication was sent on Monday, February 5 to programs with ISPPs, detailing their options and next steps.
3. With the discontinuation of the match, the pre-select option will also be discontinued after the Spring 2024 match. This decision was based on the many comments and feedback ACEND received during the Dietetics Application Process Task Force (DAP-TF) December 2023 Town Hall.
4. To ensure an equitable process and level the playing field, the ACEND Board

voted to **require all supervised practice program types (DIs, CPs and GPs), including those not participating in DICAS, to follow and abide by the applicant notification due date and the applicant decision due date starting Fall 2024.** Note that programs that accept students within their own institution (e.g., a sophomore applying to a dietetics program that starts junior year) do not have to follow or abide by these due dates.

5. Based on feedback received during the December Town Hall, the application process due dates were shifted earlier by two weeks to allow sufficient time for programs with start dates before August.

6. Key dates that must be followed by all supervised practice programs (all DIs, CPs, and GPs):

### **FALL Due Dates**

- December 1, 2024: Applicant notification due date. Programs must notify applicants on or before this date.
- December 15, 2024: Applicant decision due date. Programs may NOT require an applicant's decision to accept an appointment prior to this date.

### **SPRING Due Dates**

- March 1, 2025: Applicant notification due date. Programs must notify applicants on or before this date.
- March 15, 2025: Applicant decision due date. Programs may NOT require an applicant's decision to accept an appointment prior to this date.

7. The 2024-2025 application cycles (fall and spring) will serve as a pilot to revise and improve the process, where needed. As a pilot, participation in the Dietetics Inclusive Centralized Application Service (DICAS) will remain optional for CPs and GPs; however, for the 2025-2026 cycle and moving forward, 100% enrollment in DICAS will be required. This includes DIs, CPs and GPs.

ACEND will be hosting two town halls to present the new dietetics application process and answer program questions:

Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm CT

Friday, March 1, 2024, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm CT

To register for one of these town halls, access the ACEND Town Hall webpage [HERE](#). In addition, a session is being planned for Thursday, April 4, 2024 during the Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) annual meeting in Seattle, WA. This topic will also be included as one of the roundtable discussions during the NDEP meeting. I encourage you to attend at least one of these town halls/sessions.

The DAP-TF continues its work this year to finalize the code of ethics and traffic rules for the application process, develop guidance for programs especially free-standing Dietetic Internship programs that do not have the support of a university admission department, and make available needed training materials. Ultimately,

the goal is to incorporate the process into the ACEND policies and/or standards to ensure enforcement. This communication was sent to all programs on Tuesday, February 6, 2024.

## March 8, 2024 DEI Webinar: Empowering Dietetics Students Session 1

ACEND® will be sponsoring a 2-session DEI webinar series this year presented by Ms. Tamara Melton, MS, RDN, LD, Co-founder and Executive Director of Diversify Dietetics. The first session, Empowering Dietetics Students: Navigating Microaggressions & Advocacy in Academic Settings, will be held on Friday, March 8, 2024 from 11:00 AM-12:30 PM CT and is intended for students/interns. During the webinar, Ms. Melton will present several scenarios and case studies of microaggression and will provide tips and strategies on how to address each of the presented cases. The objective is to empower students, interns, faculty, and preceptors to respond appropriately when they experience or when they witness a difficult situation. While this webinar is intended for students/interns, we encourage educators, preceptors, and administrators to attend. The webinar has been approved for 1.5 hours (Level 2) and will be recorded. **Note, only attendees who participate in the live session are eligible to receive CPEs for this event. Those who listen to the recording will not receive CPE credit.** For additional information and to register for this event, please click [HERE](#).

The second session of this two-part series is scheduled for November 19, 2024 as part of the November Town Hall.

## ACEND® Surveys of Supervised Practice/Experiential Learning Programs Students and Graduates (DIs, CPs)

Part of ACEND's evaluation of the Future Education Model Accreditation Standards is benchmarking the Graduate Program (GP) outcomes against other ACEND accredited programs (graduate DIs and CPs) by collecting data from their students and graduates. In March, ACEND will be sending two (2) email communications to program directors of supervised practice/experiential learning programs. Each communication includes an email script and link for a student exit survey or graduate survey. In the brief student exit survey (2-5 minutes), students are asked to report on their readiness for practice. The graduate survey is also brief (3-5 minutes) and asks graduates to report on their preparation and competence for practice in nutrition and dietetics as well as current employment. Thank you for your continued support and leadership in the training of our future nutrition and dietetics practitioners.

## Updated Webinar on Evaluating International Students

The ACEND® Board has updated the video training on **how to evaluate international students applying to U.S.-based ACEND programs** to assist programs that receive inquiries from international students about applying to their program. The following has been updated:

- **2022 Accreditation Standards:** The webinar is aligned with the 2022 Accreditation Standards.

- **International Students Checklist:** The webinar provides an overview of the **International Students Checklist** available for international students and the role program directors play in each step.

Please contact **ACEND®** if there are additional resources that would be helpful for guiding international students.

## Call for ACEND Program Reviewer Applications

ACEND is recruiting nutrition and dietetics educators and practitioners to become ACEND Program Reviewers! ACEND Program Reviewers examine nutrition and dietetics educational programs and conduct site visits to universities and other organizations with ACEND-accredited programs. This peer-review accreditation process strengthens nutrition and dietetics education and the profession as a whole.

ACEND Program Reviewers serve for three-year terms, beginning June 2024. **This year, we are especially in need of reviewers with experience managing Coordinated Programs and practitioners actively engaged in nutrition and dietetics practice.** Criteria include the following:

- Membership in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and registration (RDN or NDTR) by the Commission on Dietetic Registration preferred
- Master's or higher degree preferred
- Willing to provide professional leadership
- Employed in education or practice for more than three years
- Have a commitment to quality nutrition and dietetics education programs
- Represent a major area or area of nutrition and dietetics practice
- Meet the time commitment required by the position (prepare for and conduct two site visits per year and review two to four program reports per year, estimated to be 20 days annually)
- Be able to complete program reviewer training following their appointment (visit link below to review training requirements)
- Program Reviewers may not serve simultaneously on other groups within the Academy that may represent a conflict of interest with ACEND® activities or violate U.S. Department of Education regulations (i.e., member of the academy Board of Directors, Academy BOD Executive Committee, HOD Leadership Team, member of the Commission on Dietetic Registration)

In addition to learning about current nutrition and dietetics education and “giving back” to the profession, there are several benefits. You will further develop leadership and communication skills, travel to universities and practice sites across the country (expenses covered by ACEND) and enjoy the camaraderie of peers in the profession. Many ACEND Program Reviewers comment that the experience has helped them to improve their own practice or educational programs. ACEND Program Reviewers are also eligible to receive CEUs for their service. Finally, ACEND Program Reviewers can add to their leadership experience by running for positions on the ACEND Board of Directors after at least three years of experience as a Program Reviewer.

Visit <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/acend-training-and-volunteer-opportunities/program-reviewers/link-to-program-reviewer-applications> to apply. If you know someone who would make a great reviewer, please pass along this opportunity. **Applications are currently being accepted until February 29, 2024. The next application period will take place October 1-31, 2024.**

Please contact [acendnominations@eatright.org](mailto:acendnominations@eatright.org) with any questions.



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