

COORDINATED PROGRAM IN DIETETICS

HANDBOOK

University of Alabama

**Department of Human Nutrition and Hospitality
Management
Updated 9/6/16**

COORDINATED PROGRAM SUPPLEMENTAL HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Students accepted into the Coordinated Program (CP) have entered a unique phase of their college education. No longer traditional college students, they have accepted the additional role of “professional-in-training.” This new role carries a greater responsibility and commitment to class attendance, timeliness, attire and other factors that will be addressed which directly relate to job performance and professional presentation. A student preparing to become a registered dietitian needs to develop an attitude of commitment to the profession. Attendance in all classes, field trips, or special tours/seminars and prompt appearance for supervised practice is **expected** as a demonstration of this professional commitment. This is a necessary competency for any successful endeavor. It is difficult to stress adequately the importance of attitude toward this aspect of professional life. In the event an emergency arises, the student is expected to notify the faculty member in the Department and the preceptor, if in a supervised practice site. Failure to comply will be reflected in the course grade, evaluation of performance, and any reference from the instructor or preceptor. Each time a student reports to or leaves a facility or unit, the preceptor should be notified.

The CP adheres strictly to the Codes of Student Conduct and Academic Conduct of the University. Several classes include the pledge on tests. All students are expected to conduct themselves in their professional roles (which include written work) with honesty and integrity. In the event any student is found guilty of any infraction of the Honor Codes, that student is automatically withdrawn from CP.

Students are encouraged to maintain a calendar of events in whatever format they prefer. It is critical to be at appointments on time, to submit assignments on time, and to have those records available at all times.

PROGRAM STATUS

The Coordinated Program is currently granted accreditation status by The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago IL 60606 800-877-1600 ext. 5400, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION

Professional presentation encompasses a variety of behaviors and attitudes which, in total, reflect individuals' perceptions about their careers. One of the purposes of the CP is to assist students as they develop professional skills which will guide them to become successful practitioners and will reflect positively on the individuals, the program, the University, and the dietetics profession. Toward this end, professional presentation is a graded component in each CP course. Specifically, it includes keeping appointments on time; appearance in supervised practice sites (attire/uniform, shoes, hair restraints when appropriate, name tag, etc.); overall appearance of written work; working relationships with classmates and facility staffs; attendance at professional meetings; and any other aspect identified on course outlines.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Although a major aspect of professional presentation, confidentiality is so important that it warrants a separate discussion. Confidentiality applies to

classroom discussions, individual conferences, information gathered in supervised practice sites, and **patient information**. The confidentiality of patient information is so important that the guarantee of this confidentiality is a written component in the training agreements which the University signs with the individual healthcare facilities.

In the classroom, the use of specific examples in teaching occasionally involves information which needs to remain confidential to that class. The student is expected to honor that confidentiality. When in doubt about any information, do not say anything about it. Questions that may arise concerning **any** aspect of class or supervised practice may be discussed in confidence with the faculty instructor and/or the program director. All such discussions will be held in confidence.

WRITTEN WORK

All written assignments must be typed. Any exception to this will be noted by the instructor. Penalties will be imposed for spelling errors, grammatical errors, incorrect sentence structure, and content errors. Written work is reflective of professional competence.

Each student is advised to retain a copy of all written work submitted until the material is returned with a grade. In spite of the care which is taken in handling written materials, occasionally something does get lost. Since the student is ultimately responsible for submitting the work, having a copy may preclude having to repeat the assignment. Additionally, special projects may be of value to students as they interview for jobs after graduation. Many graduates have stated that the projects they completed while in the program have been instrumental in their being selected for jobs.

PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

An important part of professional growth is an understanding of the dietetic organizations. The student should take advantage of the opportunities to learn about and, where possible, participate in the Student Dietetic Association, the Tuscaloosa Dietetic Association, and The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics meetings. All professional meeting expenses are the responsibility of the student.

Students are required to attend 6 professional meetings during their time in the Coordinated Program, however FNCE® will count as 3 professional meetings due to the expense and time of attending this conference. Documentation of your attendance at the meeting should be given to the program director.

The Student Dietetic Association (SDA) meets several times each semester. Regular meeting times are posted and announced at the beginning of each semester. It is strongly encouraged that you attend these meetings and community events sponsored by SDA. These meetings DO NOT count toward your 6 professional meetings.

The Tuscaloosa Dietetic Association meets several times each year, usually on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Students are expected to attend whenever possible, as reflected on various course syllabi. You could also attend the Birmingham Dietetic Association meeting if you live in that area or would be there after a rotation.

The Alabama Dietetic Association (ALDA) meets in the spring of each year at rotating sites within the state. It is strongly encouraged that you attend this meeting. In your last spring semester of the CP, you will be required to attend to present a research poster.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics conducts the Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE®) in the fall. Students are encouraged to attend, but it must be at their own expense, as any professional meetings will be. Following attendance at the annual meeting, students may be asked to present to the Student Dietetic Association regarding their experience and knowledge gained during their attendance at FNCE. Those students not attending the annual meeting must remain in the assigned rotation Monday through Friday. A student who attends FNCE is not required to make-up hours that are missed during that time.

FACILITY AFFILIATIONS

Facilities providing supervised practice are committed to the development of registered dietitians. No reimbursement is provided to the facilities or to the preceptors. The preceptors are sharing their professional expertise and knowledge purely in support of the Coordinated Program and The University. Students receive no pay while in this learning experience.

Affiliation agreements with a variety of health care facilities - primarily in Tuscaloosa and Birmingham - are in effect. These delineate the responsibilities of all parties - student, faculty, and the health care facility. Students' responsibilities include:

ATTIRE

While in facilities, the student must maintain a professional appearance. Dress requirements may vary slightly, depending upon the facility to which the student is assigned. The following overall guidelines are universally appropriate. **Professional Clothing: Specific details may be viewed in the Student Dress Code Policy, provided in each course where students are assigned to facilities, but general guidelines follow:**

Women

- a. White laboratory coat no longer than hip length.
- b. Professional attire to wear with laboratory coats. No jeans, shorts, “cut-offs,” boots, tennis shoes or other attire deemed unprofessional. Denim and corduroy fabrics are unacceptable at some facilities. When in doubt, check with the faculty. Skirts should follow at or below the knee.
- c. Hair should present a neat appearance and should not be wet upon arrival at the facility.
- d. Nails should be well groomed. Only clear or pale pink nail polish is permitted.
- e. Nose, eyebrow, and lip piercings are not allowed in facilities.

Men

- a. White laboratory coat no longer than hip length.
- b. Professional attire to wear with laboratory coat. No jeans shorts, “cut-offs,” boots, tennis shoes or other attire deemed unprofessional. Denim and corduroy fabrics are unacceptable at some facilities. Ties may be required. When in doubt, check with the faculty. Socks should be worn.
- c. Hair should present a neat appearance. Any facial hair should be neatly trimmed.

A clean and pressed white lab coat should be worn over appropriate street clothes. Clothing should convey a professional, conservative image. Students’ hair must be clean and neatly styled (restrained). Hair nets or other restraints must be worn when working in food production or service areas or when walking through those areas.

Again, fingernails should be short and clean, and when in a food production or management rotation, unpolished. Jewelry must be kept to a minimum for health and safety reasons. Small earrings, watches, and wedding or engagement rings are acceptable. Tattoos may not be visibly displayed during any supervised practice experience. Name tags must be worn at all times while in the facilities. If a student's appearance is considered inappropriate by the faculty instructor or by the preceptor, the student will be requested to correct the situation before participating in scheduled activities.

STUDENT LIABILITY (MALPRACTICE) INSURANCE

Students are covered against "malpractice" litigation; this insurance is provided under a blanket policy administered through the University of Alabama System.

BACKGROUND CHECK, HEALTH REPORTS AND INSURANCE

Students are expected to carry their own health and accident insurance. In the event of an accident, the student will receive emergency treatment on site or at the nearest healthcare facility, but the student is responsible for payment of any charges incurred. Specific information related to this coverage will be required at the beginning of spring of the junior year. The University's student health coverage meets the criteria for this requirement.

Prior to beginning rotations in the CP, the following documentation of completion is required by each student. We have partnered with Certified Background Check in order to obtain the following tests and documentation in a timely manner:

1. Tuberculin skin test within the past 12 months or documentation as a previous positive reactor or a chest x-ray taken within the past 12 months.
2. Proof of Rubella and Rubeola immunity by positive antibody titers or 2 doses of MMR; mumps.
3. Varicella immunity, by positive history of chickenpox or proof of Varicella immunization.
4. Proof of Hepatitis B immunization or completion of a certification of declination of vaccine.
5. Proof of the most current immunization against influenza strain(s) as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control or physician verification that the immunization(s) are contraindicated for the Program Participant.
6. Current CPR Certification.
7. Complete a drug screen.
8. A background check included the following:
 1. Social Security number verification.
 2. Criminal Search (7 years)
 3. Violent Sexual Offender & Predator registry
 4. HHS/OIG/GSA

Please note that you may be required to do these tests multiple times to meet specific facility requirements. More information will be provided to you upon your acceptance to the Coordinated Program on the process of obtaining these tests and documents.

TRANSPORTATION

The student will be responsible for his/her own transportation at all times to the assigned facilities. Students should be prepared to go out of town for selected supervised practice experiences, meetings, and/or seminars, when necessary. In the senior block, travel could be extensive, up to four days per week, depending upon where the student lives and where the student is assigned. Typically, students living in Birmingham are assigned rotations in the Birmingham area. Students living in Tuscaloosa typically will be assigned at least one three- to five-week rotation in the Birmingham area in the fall semester. Students assume all liability for safety in traveling to or from assigned areas.

ABSENCES

In the event of extenuating circumstances, if it is possible to arrange a day of personal leave from a rotation which can be used for job interviewing, illness, or some other activity **which receives prior approval by the supervising faculty member and is coordinated with the preceptor.** This is a privilege, not a right, and should not be perceived as a “free day.” Depending upon the total hours of absence, it may be necessary to make up this time in order to complete the rotation. In the event of a planned absence, the supervising faculty member should be contacted first, and if the request is approved, approval should be sought from the preceptor. A form will be provided for this purpose. In the event of illness, contact the preceptor and the faculty member **immediately.**

During the fall semester, time is allocated for students who are able to attend the Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE) of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Those who do not attend are expected to remain in the rotation to which they were assigned the previous week.

ACADEMY MEMBERSHIP

Students are required to join the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics as student members in their junior year in lieu of a textbook for the NHM 395 course. One of the primary benefits is the subscription to the *Journal of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* and access to members-only areas of the Academy website, including the Evidence-Analysis Library (EAL). Additionally, membership reflects a tangible interest in the profession which can be helpful in scholarship applications and in a job search. Students are strongly encouraged to maintain their membership throughout their time in the CP.

TESTS

In addition to tests within each course, several tests are administered routinely to students in CP. The first is the pre-admission test which each applicant must successfully complete to be considered for admission. The final exams at the end of the senior block are comprehensive not only for their respective courses, but across the upper level professional courses. Many exams given at the upper level are written in a multiple choice format, similar to the national registration examination format. In addition, exit exams may be administered in supervised practice experiences.

EVALUATION

Your preceptors will evaluate you in each of your rotations. The preceptor of the faculty member of the rotation will meet with you to go over your evaluation.

You will also have an evaluation in the fall semester with the CP Director to assess your progress halfway through the Coordinated Program.

INDIVIDUAL STUDIES

Students in CP are required to take one individual study, NHM 491. This course can be taken during the summer preceding the senior block of courses (NHM 463, 464, 465, 466, 475, 476, or graduate level equivalents). This experience offers the student the opportunity to focus on a particular area of interest or to strengthen an area determined to need strengthening. Each course carries three hours of credit and requires 200 scheduled hours in a supervised practice facility for completion.

COORDINATED PROGRAM COURSES

In the traditional rotation, the first uniquely CP professional course is NHM 366, offered concurrently with NHM 365 in the spring semester or in the Interim term for those admitted in the spring semester. NHM 390 is offered during interim or fall term following completion of NHM 374 and 365. This course is designed to bridge the transition between NHM 374 Quantity Food Production and Service and NHM 475/76 Foodservice Administration/Supervised Practice. Students become familiar with the layout and design of a healthcare facility's foodservice operation and gain experience in various aspects of the operation.

During the senior block in the traditional program, students complete three professional courses. Students accomplish their senior clinical rotation (466), their community nutrition rotation (464), and the senior foodservice management rotation (476). The non-traditional rotation includes all of these courses but sequences them to prevent overlapping in facilities, culminating with the senior foodservice management rotation in January following the senior block.

The final professional courses in the Coordinated Program are offered during the spring semester for both the traditional and non-traditional sequences. These culminating rotations are NHM 467, a rotation in long-term care, and NHM 485, a rotation in dietetics management and communication.

ADDITIONAL ANTICIPATED EXPENSES

Application Fee **\$30**

Expenses vary from individual to individual. Those which are subject to considerable variation include:

Meals while assigned to facilities	Variable
Gasoline	Variable
Lab coat	\$25

Registration at meetings and seminars	
Annual meeting of the Academy/FNCE (Includes registration, transportation, meals, and housing)	\$600–1,000
Alabama Dietetic Association meeting	\$50-200

Expenses which are slightly more predictable but which are subject to change include:

Student membership, The Academy	\$50.00/year
Basic Life Support/CPR Class	\$75
Background check/drug test/document tracker	\$100
Diploma fee (prior to graduation)	\$36.00
Registration exam application fee	\$200.00
CDR registration fee (after passing RD exam)	\$50.00

ADMISSION AND CONTINUANCE POLICY

Students must maintain a final letter grade of “B-” or higher on all professional courses at the 300 and 400 level (NHM 361, 362, 363, 365, 366, 372, 373, 374, 390, 395, 432, 454, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 475, 476, 485, 491, and BER 345). The academic performance of any student earning a grade of “C+” or less in any of these professional courses will necessitate the student repeating the course in which the grade was received before continuing. **A course may not be taken more than twice, and a maximum of two different courses may be repeated for the applicant to be considered for admission to the program and continuance in the Coordinated Program, once a student is admitted to the program. If a grade is not corrected to policy requirements upon repeating a course, the student will not be considered for admission or will be withdrawn from the Coordinated Program. If a student has made a grade less than B- in two courses, then makes less**

than a B- in a third course, the student will not be considered for admission to the program or will be withdrawn from the program if already admitted.

All cases will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine whether or not the student may proceed with the next professional course in the sequence. When the normal progression through the program is interrupted, the student is not guaranteed a place in the next class. The student must submit a written petition to the Admissions Committee seeking permission to enroll with the next class.

In addition, a grade less than “C-” in the following supporting courses will be reviewed by the faculty and will require appropriate remediation which may include repeating the course.

Inorganic and Organic Chemistry

Human Anatomy and Physiology

Psychology

In addition to academic requirements, students must demonstrate acceptable levels of pre-professional practice in supervised practice and independent study sites. Definitions of acceptable levels of practice will be thoroughly discussed in class at the beginning of each semester. Copies of evaluation tools used by preceptors will be provided to the students. As students progress in the program, they are expected to increase their abilities to function independently and assume responsibility for their actions. Preceptors and/or faculty are available to provide guidance to students in supervised practice and independent study. When the faculty determine that a student is not practicing at the acceptable level, the student will be notified in writing. If problems continue,

the student will be administratively withdrawn from the course with a failing grade, and the student will be withdrawn from the Coordinated Program in Dietetics.

Any change in a student's schedule MUST be approved by the advisor. All students must meet all didactic and supervised practice requirements.

STUDENT GRIEVEANCES

If you have a grievance regarding the Coordinated Program in Dietetics, please follow the University-wide Academic Grievance Policy at http://sa.ua.edu/complaint_academic.cfm. If you are not satisfied after all program and University grievance policies have been followed, you should then contact ACEND at 800/877-1600, ext. 5400.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The Program Director and the faculty are available to respond to any questions students may have regarding the career area, the program, and specific courses. It is recommended that you work with your advisor to plan your program of study when you first enter the major to ensure that your courses are sequenced in a timely manner to permit you to meet your goals.