USE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for students in the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) Program at Texas A&M University. Objectives of this handbook are as follows:

- Identify the Texas A&M University DPD Philosophy, Mission, Goals, Objectives and policies and procedures;
- Understand the purpose of accreditation and the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND);
- Identify and explain the specific educational path one must follow to become a Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (NDTR) and Registered Dietitian (RD) / Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN);
- Identify and provide resources to assist DPD students in their educational path to becoming a NDTR and RD/RDN
- Identify career opportunities for NDTRs and RD/RDNs.

Resources referenced in compilation of this handbook include the Applicant Guide to Supervised Practice Experience, ACEND web site, D&D Digital web site, GRE® web site and The University of Wisconsin-Madison web site and handout.

DPD PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The DPD Program is designed to provide the knowledge and skills at the undergraduate level that are needed for competent dietetics practice. The curriculum is comprised of courses in nutrition, foods, biochemistry, physiology, management, social and behavioral sciences, and other supporting courses. Emphasis is placed on the development and demonstration of technical and critical thinking skills, oral and written communication ability and professionalism with the intent of more thoroughly preparing our undergraduates for graduate programs and the dietetic profession. Opportunities for the application of theoretical knowledge are provided through laboratory experiences, practicum exercises, and experiences with professionals in dietetics, nutrition, and food service operations on campus and in the Bryan/College Station community, and/or simulation in the classroom.

The mission of the Texas A&M University DPD Program is to prepare future leaders in the dietetic profession by providing a high quality undergraduate level education and experiential learning activities that generate strong technical, critical thinking and communication skills and professionalism.

The mission of the DPD Program is in accord with the Texas A&M University goal of achieving educational excellence while contributing to scholastic advancement, discovery research and community engagement that leads to economic development in Texas.

DPD Program Goals and Measurable Outcomes

The DPD program has established program goals with specific measurable achievement targets that are used to assess the achievement of each of the program’s goals. Data is collected on an ongoing basis to assess the achievement of the program goals and targets. Goals and measurable achievement targets are identified below.

Goal 1:
To prepare DPD graduates for accredited DI programs, graduate study, and employment in nutrition, dietetics and related areas by providing a sound undergraduate curriculum that is continuously reviewed and revised in accordance with new knowledge, technologies, and the changing dynamics of the dietetic profession; the DPD curriculum emphasizes technical foundation knowledge, communication skills, and life sciences.
Over a five year period, 90% of DPD students will display technical knowledge on identified assignments.

Over a five year period, 90% of DPD students will demonstrate critical thinking skills on identified assignments.

Over a five year period, 90% of DPD students will demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills on identified assignments.

Over a five year period, 90% of graduating DPD seniors will agree that the nutritional science curriculum provided sound technical knowledge and communication skills in preparation for a dietetic internship (DI), graduate school and/or a career in dietetics as indicated by graduating senior surveys.

Over a five year period, 90% of DPD graduates will agree that the nutritional science curriculum provided technical knowledge, communication skills, and life sciences and enhanced their critical thinking skills in preparation for a DI, graduate school and/or a career in dietetics as indicated by the results of the annual one and three year out graduate surveys.

Over a five year period, 90% of DI Directors will agree that Texas A&M University DPD graduates demonstrate technical foundation knowledge, critical thinking skills and communication skills as indicated by DI Director surveys.

**Goal 2:**
To prepare DPD graduates for transition into accredited DI programs, graduate study, and employment in nutrition, dietetics and related areas.

- Over a five year period, 80% of students who enter the Texas A&M University DPD program will graduate in the DPD program within four years.
- Over a five year period, 60% of DPD students will apply to accredited DI programs during the academic year they graduate.
- Over a five year period, 80% of DPD students who apply for accredited DI programs will match.
- Over a five year period, 80% of first time test takers will pass the registration exam for dietitians as indicated by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) exam passage records.

**Goal 3:**
To prepare DPD graduates to exhibit professionalism in all components of accredited DI programs and/or employment in the nutrition and dietetics profession.

- Over a five year period, 90% of DPD students will display an understanding of ethical behavior as it applies to the dietetic profession by responding correctly to embedded exam question(s) in identified courses.
- Over a five year period, 90% of graduating DPD seniors will agree that the Nutritional Science curriculum established a basis for strong social, ethical, and cultural behavior and provided the opportunity to strengthen their leadership and team-member skills through group projects and assignments as indicated by graduating senior surveys.
- Over a five year period, 95% of DPD graduates will display professional ethics by honoring their acceptance to the specified DI program that they matched during the DI match process as indicated by DPD program match records.
- Over a five year period, 90% of DPD graduates will agree that the Nutritional Science curriculum established a basis for strong social, ethical, and cultural behavior as indicated by the results of the annual one and three year out graduate surveys.
- Over a five year period, 90% of DPD graduates will agree that the Nutritional Science curriculum provided the opportunity to strengthen their leadership and team-member skills through group projects and assignments as indicated by the results of the annual one and three year out graduate surveys.
- Over a five year period, 90% of DI Directors who have supervised Texas A&M University DPD graduates will agree that DPD graduates display strong social, ethical, and cultural behavior and the ability to effectively work as a team member in collaborative efforts as indicated by the results of DI Director surveys.

The Texas A&M University DPD program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). ACEND serves and protects students and the public by assuring the quality and continued improvement of nutrition and dietetics education programs. ACEND is recognized by the United States Department of Education and is a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors. Additional information on ACEND is located at http://www.eatright.org/acend.

Program outcomes data are available upon request.