



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
Dietetic Internship  
Program

**Texas A&M Dietetic Internship  
Master's of Clinical Nutrition  
Program  
Policies and Procedures  
Manual**

## Table of Contents

|               | Title   | Page |
|---------------|---|------|
| Policy Number | Introduction                                      |      |
| 01            | Admission Criteria                                | 4    |
| 02            | Scheduling, Calendar, and Attendance              | 5    |
| 03            | Student Records                                   | 7    |
| 04            | Access to Student Support Services                | 8    |
| 05            | Insurance, Liability, and Injury                  | 9    |
| 06            | Graduate Program                                  | 11   |
| 07            | Evaluation During Supervised Practice             | 12   |
| 08            | Counseling, Advising, and Disciplinary Action     | 13   |
| 09            | Requirements for Program Completion               | 14   |
| 10            | Dismissal, Appeal, Deferment, and Withdrawal      | 16   |
| 11            | Grievance Procedure                               | 18   |
| 12            | Class and Meeting Attendance                      | 20   |
| 13            | Agency Policies                                   | 21   |
| 14            | Appearance and Attire                             | 22   |
| 15            | Background Check, Drug Testing, and Immunizations | 24   |
| 16            | Facility and Preceptor Selection and Evaluation   | 25   |
| 17            | COVID-19  | 27   |
| 18            | Equitable Treatment                               | 29   |

## **Introduction**

The Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program is a combined dietetic internship program that includes graduate studies and research at the Texas A&M campus with the supervised practice experiences to address the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) established standards and competencies for dietetic internship programs. Graduates of this program will receive a Master's in Clinical Nutrition and will be eligible for the credentialing examination by the Commission on Dietetic Registration to become a registered dietitian nutritionist. This Policy and Procedure Manual applies to all students in the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program and Master's of Clinical Nutrition. These policies apply to all components of the Dietetic Internship Program. A copy of this manual will be made available to all students in the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program and Master's of Clinical Nutrition. It is the responsibility of all students in the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program to be familiar with the policies and procedures described in this manual, as well as the rules and regulation of Texas A&M University and each affiliating institution where they receive supervised practice experience.

## TITLE: Admission Criteria

**Policy 01**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** The Texas A&M Dietetic Internship (TAMU DI) Program establishes admission criteria to ensure students have a great potential for success in the program and professionally.

### **PROCEDURES:**

Minimum criteria for application for admission into the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program includes:

1. Overall grade point average (GPA) 3.0 with a GPA of 3.25 preferred.
2. Completion of an ACEND accredited Nutrition and Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) by the start of the dietetic internship program as evidenced by an original Verification Statement or Declaration of Intent signed by the DPD Program Director.
3. A minimum of a Bachelor of Science degree granted from a U.S. regionally accredited university or college or a foreign equivalent verified by a nonprofit Foreign Degree Evaluation Agency approved by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).
4. Non-refundable application fee of \$25.00.
5. Three letters of recommendation to be included with the application materials.
6. A phone interview may be requested.

Upon acceptance into the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program, additional documentation or vetting prior to the start of the DI Program include:

1. Original Verification Statement signed by the DPD Director. Electronic verification statements may be submitted if approved by ACEND.
2. Official transcript(s) from undergraduate program(s) with date degree conferred.
3. Background check by Texas A&M approving student for work.
4. Proof of up-to-date standard vaccinations, including HBV, MMR, Dtap, polio, varicella, and other immunizations determined required by affiliated facilities. Proof of immunity response via titers may substitute copies of medical records.
5. Documentation of tuberculin skin test or equivalent.
6. Memorandum of insurance for proof of liability insurance for the duration of the supervised practice.
7. Certification for CPR for the duration of the supervised practice.
8. Texas A&M Dietetic Interns are required to be members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. A copy of membership card is required as proof of membership for the duration of the program.
9. Prior to the supervised practice, a letter by primary care practitioner clearing the student for performing standard work activities.

## **TITLE: Scheduling, Calendar, and Attendance**

**Policy 02**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** The Program Director is responsible for planning the intern schedule during the supervised practice component of the TAMU DI. They plan the annual intern calendar, schedule supervised practice rotations, and monitor attendance and clock hours to ensure interns receive a minimum of 1000 clock hours during supervised practice.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Interns accepted into the TAMU DI Program will begin graduate coursework in the fall semester after computer matching. Interns in the Master's of Clinical Nutrition (MCN) Program complete coursework on Texas A&M campus the first year of the program and enter the supervised practice in August of the second year.
2. Interns in the doctoral program may have a modified timeline. Interns requiring more time to complete graduate work may request a one-year deferment.
3. While completing coursework on Texas A&M campus, interns follow the official TAMU calendar, which can be found in the Graduate Catalog or Office of the Registrar. Time off for illness and vacation are dependent on the individual student's advisor and the University Regulations, as well as the course policy for which the student is enrolled.
4. The supervised practice portion of the program is 36 weeks in length: two weeks orientation, approximately 10 weeks clinical, approximately 8 weeks management, approximately 7 weeks community/wellness, and 2 weeks staff relief. Assignments may vary depending on availability of preceptors at supervised practice sites, discretion of Program Director, or intern request.
5. Interns are expected to work full time at supervised practice sites, with the possible exception of a weekly class, travel time to the weekly class, and professional meetings. Time allotted for class and travel will vary among interns and depend on location of class and current rotation in which they are scheduled. Occasional field trips may also be scheduled.
6. The daily work schedule is set by the affiliating institution and preceptor, and may include holidays, weekends, hours of work, lunches and breaks, and other variations in the schedule. The work schedule of interns will approximately mirror that of the preceptor they are working with.
7. Dietetic Interns are scheduled to work with preceptors for educational purposes only. Scheduling interns to specific sites with preceptors does not imply replacing an employee by the intern.
8. Interns are to track clock hours on a weekly basis and record hours on a time sheet

for each rotation. At the end of each rotation, the preceptor is to sign (either in writing or electronically) the time sheet verifying the number of hours recorded. Time sheets are turned into the Program Director who records the hours on a spreadsheet to ensure a minimum of 1000 clock hours are received.

9. Interns can take leave as outlined below, but must be prepared to make up lost time within a rotation when the time off prevents meeting the necessary competencies. All leave must be recorded on the time sheet, made up as described below, and documented by the preceptor as needed.

| <b>Leave Type</b>                      | <b>Time Allowed</b> | <b>Prior Approval</b>   | <b>Make-up Provision</b>                           | <b>Comments</b>  |
|--|---------------------|---|--|--|
| Sick Leave                             | 3 days*             | No, but must contact RD and Director as soon as possible            | To be determined jointly by preceptor and Director | To be used for illness or doctors appointments only  |
| Bereavement                            | 3 day               | Yes; 24-hour notice must be submitted in writing to RD and Director | To be determined jointly by preceptor and Director | Immediate family or spouse's immediate family only; others may apply subject Director approval |
| Personal (interviews, weddings, etc.,) | 2 day               | Yes; 2-week notice must be submitted to the RD and Director         | Time must be made up as determined by preceptor    | More than 2 days may result in dismissal   |
| Professional (meetings)                | 1 day               | Yes; 2-week notice must be submitted in writing to RD and Director  | No   | If more days are used, time must be made up  |
| Holiday Break                          | ~2 weeks            | None, included in rotation schedule                                 | No   | Holiday break included in rotation schedule  |

\* If extended sick leave is required for an illness (more than 3 consecutive days) or frequent medical appointments (more than 3 appointments) result in missed time, documentation from a physician must be provided. Documentation from a physician is required on the first day back from sick leave verifying the intern is released to return to work.

In the case of frequent medical appointments, a doctor's note is required following the third appointment verifying the intern is under the doctor's care. The intern's schedule will be adjusted as needed and may require an extension in the program past the scheduled end date of the supervised practice to meet the 1000-hour minimum clock hour requirement.

## **TITLE: Student Records**

**Policy 03**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** Texas A&M University intends to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) regarding the protection of privacy of student records. These policies apply to interns in the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program, including records related to the supervised practice.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. The MCN Program is a 2-part program, combining both graduate work and supervised practice (internship). Two separate applications are required, and files are maintained in different locations.
2. The application process to the TAMU DI is via the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Service, or DICAS, and D&D Digital Online Dietetics Internship Matching Service. Participation is only during the Spring Match.
3. Files for the intern related to the supervised practice are maintained with the Program Director, either electronically or on paper. Records include relevant application materials, record of clock hours, evaluations, and other pertinent information related to the TAMU DI or intern. Intern records are considered confidential.
4. Interns that have MCN Program records relating to graduate school are maintained in various University offices and the chief administrator in each of these offices is responsible for them. TAMU intends to comply with the FERPA. This act is designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading information through formal or informal hearings. A policy statement explaining this act in detail is located with the Office of the Registrar in the General Services Building or at <http://registrar.tamu.edu/Catalogs,-Policies-Procedures/FERPA/FERPA-Notice-to-Students>.

## **TITLE: Access to Student Support Services**

**Policy 04**

**Written: 7/20**

**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** While enrolled at TAMU as a student, interns in the MCN Program are registered for courses at TAMU during their graduate studies and supervised practice and therefore are eligible for support services offered by the University to students.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. All TAMU students who have paid the Student Health Services fee are entitled to receive services at A. P. Beutel Health Center ([shs.tamu.edu](http://shs.tamu.edu)). A variety of health care services are available. For appointments or information students may contact (979) 458-8310. During the graduate coursework portion of the program on the College Station campus, interns may take advantage of this service. However, due to relocation outside of College Station for much of the supervised practice portion of the program, interns are strongly encouraged to purchase private health insurance for this period of time.
2. The Student Assistance Services ([sas.tamu.edu](http://sas.tamu.edu)), located in Student Services Building, is available to TAMU students to discuss academic progress, educational goals, choice of career, personal-social effectiveness or emotional well-being. Information about limited-duration counseling can be obtained by calling (979) 845-3111. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, [caps.tamu.edu](http://caps.tamu.edu)) is also available to support students' mental health and wellbeing. The main number for CAPS is (979) 845-4427. For crisis students may go to the center on weekdays, call the Helpline (979/845-2700) on nights or weekends or on holidays, or go the Emergency Room at St. Joseph's Hospital, Baylor Scott & White Hospital at College Station, or CHI-St. Joseph Health. Other emergency resources may be located at [caps.tamu.edu/emergency-resources](http://caps.tamu.edu/emergency-resources).
3. The Department of Student Financial Aid ([financialaid.tamu.edu](http://financialaid.tamu.edu)) participates in several federal and state programs. TAMU students can contact the Department of Student Financial Aid at (979) 845-3236 for more information about available services.
4. Other resources available to TAMU students include use of libraries, computing resources (including e-mail accounts), assistance for testing for students with disabilities, recreational sports, Memorial Student Center, services and programs through the Department of Student Life, and multicultural services. Students should refer to the Graduate Catalog for more information about these services.
5. If an intern in the MCN Program graduates prior to the start the supervised practice, that intern will no longer be eligible for TAMU student services or financial aid.
6. All interns will have access to required coursework via the online learning management system for the fall and spring semesters.



## TITLE: Insurance, Liability, and Injury

Policy 05  
Written: 7/20  
Revised: N/A

**POLICY:** Interns are responsible for their own malpractice insurance, additional health insurance, and transportation during the supervised practice portion of the TAMU DI program. Additionally, interns are responsible for understanding the practice facilities' policies and responsibilities for injury to the intern.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Interns are strongly encouraged to have private health insurance throughout the dietetic internship program and to review their personal accident medical insurance. Health insurance is available through Texas A&M Student Health Services; however, this only covers care provided at the Student Health Services clinic on Texas A&M campus in College Station. Since there is no guarantee the practice facility will provide insurance covering injuries sustained during the internship, interns are also strongly encouraged to purchase private health insurance during the supervised practice portion of the program.
2. Interns are not covered by the professional liability coverage of the supervised practice facilities or by TAMU. Interns are required to show proof of purchase of malpractice insurance prior to beginning supervised practice rotations. Information on malpractice insurance can be obtained from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy). In addition to securing malpractice insurance, students are encouraged to ask the practice facility about insurance covering interns while at the respective facility and to review their personal accident medical insurance policies.
3. Supervised practice sites are located in various facilities throughout Central and Southeast Texas. Interns are responsible for their own transportation to and from internship rotation sites, as well as other required internship activities, such as classes or field trips.
4. Interns are responsible for maintaining a valid Texas or other state driver's license, current state vehicle inspection and registration, personal automobile insurance coverage, wearing seat belts, and obeying traffic laws and regulations.
5. Interns are encouraged to follow the safety recommendations set forth in the Student Travel procedures outlined in [Texas A&M Student Rule for Travel](#).
6. Interns may be required to ride in a car with a preceptor while traveling to a rotation site. On such an occasion, the intern must adhere to all policies of the supervised practice facilities. If the intern is injured while in transit, the travel and injury policy of the supervised practice facility will apply to injury and damages. If no policy exists, the intern's private health insurance will cover the cost of injury. Interns may be asked to sign an agreement that removes the supervised practice facility from responsibility in case of

injury during travel with a preceptor. In this case, the intern has the right to refuse and can request a change in supervised practice site.

7. Interns need to provide the Program Director with emergency contact information, which will be submitted to the administrative offices of the Department of Nutrition and with the Program Director.
8. The Program Director is authorized to use University-owned vehicles through the Department of Nutrition in the event of an organized field trip in which the Program Director transports a group of interns. Interns will be required to sign a CIRT (Critical Incident Response Team) form prior to the event.
9. Interns are expected to practice appropriate personal hygiene and reduce other risk factors for becoming ill. TAMU bears no responsibility for injury or illness that occurs during the supervised practice. If an intern becomes ill, he/she should discuss the situation with the preceptor and comply with the policy on attendance (refer to Policy 02). If an Intern is injured while in a facility, he/she is to report the injury immediately to the preceptor and comply with the policy/procedure for reporting and dealing with an injury at that facility.

**TITLE: Graduate Program**

**Policy 06**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** Interns in the MCN Program are enrolled as students at Texas A&M and are required to adhere to policies and procedures of the graduate program.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Each intern is responsible for obtaining a copy of TAMU Graduate Catalog and familiarizing themselves with its content prior to entering the graduate program. The graduate catalog is located with the Office of the Registrar (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/>). They are also responsible for reviewing their degree program's graduate handbook for graduate school policies and procedures specific to that department.
2. Interns in the MCN Program are required to complete a professional paper, as well as coursework and supervised practice, to successfully complete the program. A final oral exam may be requested by the intern's graduate program advisor. A Doctoral degree requires completion of course work, passage of a preliminary exam, completion of a dissertation based on original research, and demonstration of comprehensive knowledge in field of study.
3. The graduate student's Graduate Advisory Committee is comprised of at least three members for a Master of Science or at least four members for a Doctoral degree (at least one faculty member from the major department and at least one from another department). This committee is selected by the student and the chair of their committee, who is responsible for supervising the student's academic and research program.
4. The graduate student's Advisory Committee, in consultation with the student, will develop the proposed degree plan. The degree plan must be completed and filed with the Office of Graduate Studies in the timeline set forth in the Graduate Catalog. All reasonable effort will be made by the Advisory Committee to individualize each student's degree plan and maintain high standards of scholastic quality.
5. The Graduate Catalog provides information on requirements of academic performance for coursework completed at Texas A&M. Assessment of academic performance is completed by the instructor of record for courses the intern is enrolled in and as outlined on the course syllabi. It is the intern's responsibility to meet with the instructor when there is a concern that academic performance is not meeting standards.
6. The Graduate Catalog outlines limitations on use of transfer courses (refer to the Graduate Catalog for more information). The individual department involved may have additional limitations and will be discussed when planning the degree program.

**TITLE: Evaluation During Supervised Practice**

**Policy 07**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** Evaluations are completed at the end of each rotation of the supervised practice.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. There are three areas of practice that the intern performance should be evaluated on: clinical, community/wellness, and management. At the end of each rotation the preceptor completes the appropriate evaluation and reviews this feedback with the intern. If more than one preceptor worked with an intern, they are to collaborate on completing the final rotation evaluation.
2. Prior to completing a rotation, the intern is to complete a self-evaluation utilizing the same evaluation form and review this self-evaluation with the preceptor.
3. For rotations that are 4 weeks or more in length, a mid-rotation evaluation is available for the preceptor to discuss intern progress.
4. All evaluations are turned into the Program Director after the preceptor has reviewed the results with the intern. Evaluations are reviewed by the Program Director and maintained in the intern's file kept in the Program Director's office.
5. Interns complete an evaluation of the preceptor at the end of their rotation. These evaluations are turned into the Program Director. Copies of the evaluations may be given to the respective preceptor or their manager, if applicable, after the intern completes the supervised practice.
6. If an Intern receives less than 70% overall on an evaluation, the Program Director and preceptor will discuss whether the intern needs to extend or repeat the rotation or if other additional instruction or work is required.
7. Interns are required to earn 70% or better on the professional behavior section of the intern evaluation, regardless of the overall evaluation rating. If the intern fails to earn 70% or better on the professional behavior portion of the evaluation, they will initially receive counseling from the Program Director. Subsequent failure to comply with this standard may result in a meeting between the intern, Program Director, and Preceptor. A third failure may result in dismissal from the TAMU DI program.
8. The TAMU DI Program does not provide credit for prior learning.

**TITLE: Counseling, Advising, and Disciplinary Action**

**Policy 08**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** Counseling and advising for academic issues, supervised practice performance issues, and career planning are available throughout the program.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Academic advising for interns is provided by the intern's Graduate Advisor and members of the Graduate Advisory Committee. If problems are not resolved by visiting with the student's Graduate Advisor, the student should meet with the Associate Department Head (if available), and ultimately the Department Head. If it is determined that the intern has minimal chances of academic success, the intern's Graduate Advisor and the Program Director will meet with the intern for counseling for career that is best aligned with the intern's capabilities.
2. While enrolled in the graduate school, interns have access to the Student Assistance Services for guidance and referrals. Refer to Policy 04 for detailed information of student support services.
3. During the supervised practice portion of the TAMU DI program, the Program Director provides counseling as needed to all interns regarding scheduling, career and job placement, and performance issues.
4. Interns are subject to disciplinary action for performance issues and/or ethical violations (see the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics for Dietetics Professionals located at <http://www.eatright.org/codeofethics/>). Progressive disciplinary action will be documented in the intern's file and will be as follows:
  - a. Verbal counseling for initial or minor violation
  - b. Written counseling for second occurrence signed by the intern to acknowledge receipt of the written counseling
  - c. Dismissal from program for third occurrence, or on first occurrence for major ethical violations

## **TITLE: Requirements for Program Completion**

**Policy 09**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** Successful completion of the TAMU MCN DI includes: completion of a minimum of 1000 clock hours during the supervised practice portion of the TAMU MCN DI Program; successful completion of assigned rotations during supervised practice; completion of all academic coursework, assignments and evaluations of preceptors; and graduation from the A&M graduate program. Successful completion allows the graduate to receive a Verification Statement (VS) to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to be a registered dietitian nutritionist.

### **PROCEDURES**

1. Interns must complete a minimum of 1000 clock hours during the supervised practice portion of the program. Refer to Policy 02 for information on how hours are obtained and tracked.
2. The TAMU DI does not grant supervised practice hours based on prior experiences or learning.
3. Interns must complete all required coursework and assignments assigned by the Program Director to the intern during the supervised practice. Additional alternate supervised practice assignments may be necessary to address ACEND competencies and build skills.
4. Interns must complete evaluations of preceptors the intern was assigned throughout the supervised practice. Records of the preceptor evaluations will be kept in the Program Director's office.
5. Interns must demonstrate entry-level competence based on the core and selected emphasis competency statements set forth by The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Evidence of competence in these areas are determined by preceptor evaluations, which are based directly on the competency statements. Refer to Policy 07 for evaluation procedures.
6. Completion of graduate requirements is required for program completion. Interns must complete 36 hours of graduate coursework, pass an oral defense, and remain in good academic standing with Texas A&M University to meet requirements for graduation from the MCN program.
7. Upon successful completion of the scheduled 36-week supervised practice phase, meeting a minimum of 1000 clock hours, and graduation from the master's program, interns receive a VS indicating the date that the intern completed program requirements. At least five (5) copies of the VS are provided to the intern no earlier than the last day of the program. At least one (1) original copy is maintained in the intern's permanent file in the Program Director's office.
8. Once the intern begins the TAMU DI program, they will have 150% of the program time to

complete the program requirements. For the MCN Program, this will be 33 months. This includes additional time required to repeat failed rotations, to make-up any time missed for illness or any unexpected circumstances, or to complete any required coursework.

9. Upon receipt of the VS, interns are eligible to take the Registration Examination for Dietitians. The Program Director will notify the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) on or after the date of graduation from supervised practice, utilizing the Computerized Registration Eligibility Software provided by CDR. More information on the process of notification of CDR can be found at [www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org).
10. Interns are required to be members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (the Academy). They must be familiar with the Academy's Code of Ethics for Dietetics Professionals (*American Dietetic Association/Commission on Dietetic Registration Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession* found at <http://www.eatright.org/codeofethics>) and perform or conduct themselves based on this guide.

## **TITLE: Dismissal, Appeal, Deferment, and Withdrawal**

**Policy: 10**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** Interns may withdraw from the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship (TAMU DI) Program at any time. Interns are subject to dismissal from the TAMU-DI program for non-compliance with policies, rules or regulations at Texas A&M University (TAMU), or any affiliating institution. Interns who do not perform satisfactorily during the supervised practice may also be subject to dismissal. Interns in graduate school at Texas A&M University may be dismissed for not maintaining a minimum grade point ratio (GPR) of 3.0, per graduate school regulations. Interns may appeal dismissal decisions.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Interns enrolled in the TAMU graduate program must maintain a minimum GPR of 3.0 throughout the program, including during the supervised practice. Failure to do so may result in scholastic probation or dismissal. The Academic Department and the Associate Dean of the Graduate Programs determine scholastic probation or dismissal. A graduate student can appeal a dismissal decision to the Associate Dean of the Graduate Programs.
2. Interns entering the supervised practice portion of the program are placed on probation for a period of 9 weeks. Satisfactory performance, based on evaluations by Preceptors and/or Program Director, must be demonstrated in all rotations during this period. Satisfactory performance is determined by earning an overall evaluation rating of 70% or better. Failure to perform adequately during the probationary period may be grounds for dismissal.
3. After the 9-week probationary period has expired, interns who do not satisfactorily complete a rotation by earning an overall evaluation rating of 70% or better in the rotation may be required to extend or repeat the rotation, or complete another rotation or activities needed to achieve competencies in which the intern is deficient. Failure to perform satisfactorily in an area after the probationary period will result in dismissal from the TAMU DI program.
4. Receiving an overall evaluation rating of less than 70% for three rotations following the probationary period may result in dismissal from the TAMU DI program.
5. Counseling and disciplinary action are described in Policy 08.
6. Interns are required to earn 70% or better on the professional behavior section of the intern evaluation, regardless of the overall evaluation rating. If the intern fails to earn 70% or better on the professional behavior portion of the evaluation, they will initially receive counseling from the Program Director. Subsequent failure to comply with this standard may result in a meeting between the intern, Program Director, and the preceptor. A third failure may result in dismissal from the TAMU DI program.



7. Interns in the MCN Program who are dismissed or withdraw from the program voluntarily and are seeking a tuition refund need to follow the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog.
8. Interns may defer the supervised practice portion of the TAMU DI program for a period of one year to complete graduate coursework/thesis or for personal reasons. A written letter requesting deferment to the next internship class must be submitted to the Program Director no later than three months prior to the start of the supervised practice. Interns who require more than one extra year may forfeit their Internship assignment. No enhanced consideration for future application should be expected.
9. Interns may resign from the program at any time. The intern must submit a written letter of resignation to the Program Director within 48 hours of verbal resignation. By doing so, all rights to return to the TAMU DI are forfeited and no enhanced consideration for future application should be expected.

## TITLE: Grievance Procedure

Policy: 11  
Written: 7/20  
Revised: N/A

**POLICY:** Interns and Preceptors are encouraged to question and discuss frustrations, grievances, and problems in an appropriate fashion.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Interns and preceptors may contact the Program Director individually or in groups to discuss issues of concern.
2. If an issue exists between an intern and preceptor or other affiliate employee, both parties are encouraged to discuss the issue and collaborate to develop a resolution.
3. If a specific problem exists for which a resolution is desired, but cannot be resolved collaboratively, the intern(s) or preceptor(s) must put the request, substantiated with fact, in writing and submit to the Program Director. The solution will be derived by involving appropriate staff or management from affiliating institutions. If applicable, the MCN Program intern's Graduate Advisory Committee may also be involved.
4. Interns who do not comply with policies, rules, regulations and procedures for Texas A&M, TAMU DI, or affiliating institutions, or who do not maintain the performance standards for the TAMU DI can be dismissed (refer to Policy 10). Interns in the MCN Program who are dismissed from the TAMU Graduate Program will also be dismissed from the MCN Program. Should performance or conduct during the supervised practice component of the MCN Program warrant dismissal from the Program, dismissal is affected by the Program Director both verbally and in writing. Counseling at this time may include alternate academic or professional paths for the student.
5. An intern may appeal a grade or dismissal decision to the Department Head. For those in the MCN Program, the appeal may proceed to the Dean of the College, and if applicable, to the Graduate Appeals Panel (refer to University Student Rules #59 for more information).
6. In the case of a complaint or grievance against the Program Director from an intern or preceptor in which the intern or preceptor is concerned about retaliation, they may file the complaint with the Department Head.
7. The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics will consider and review complaints that relate to a Program's compliance with the accreditation/approval standards. This should occur only after the intern has exhausted all other options available to them through the Dietetic Internship. Complaints must be signed by the complainant. For information on filing a complaint to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, intern may reference the following webpage: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/public-notices-and->

announcements/filing-a-complaint-with-acend.

## **TITLE: Class and Meeting Attendance**

**Policy: 12**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** Interns are required to complete intern classes as scheduled during supervised practice. Interns are required to attend a minimum of 2 outside professional association meetings or 1 professional seminar while completing supervised practice.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Participation in the internship class (NUTR 684) and activities will be required during supervised practice. The allotted time will be used for communication of information regarding all aspects of the program, lectures, and case-study or major project presentations.
2. Class lectures, quizzes, assignments, and grades will be maintained using an online class management system. Access will be provided through enrollment in the class using the University assigned student identification number.
3. This class will be taught primarily online or remote. However, the Program Director may require the interns travel to TAMU campus or other locations for face-to-face meetings. When a face-to-face class meeting becomes necessary, interns will be informed of meeting date, time, and location prior to the class. Preceptors will also be informed of lecture topics, date, and location in advance of the class.
4. Interns must notify the Program Director in advance if they will not be able to attend a class meeting. Interns are also required to notify the preceptor if the face-to-face meeting results in missed time from the supervised practice rotation.
5. To facilitate professional growth and networking, interns are required to attend a minimum of 2 professional meetings during the supervised practice component. Interns may attend regional dietetic association meetings, such as Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics area meetings. Attendance of the Academy's Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo or the Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Annual Conference & Exhibition may satisfy this requirement. Other professional meetings may be considered acceptable, pending approval by the Program Director.
6. Interns who wish to attend other professional meetings that may interfere with supervised practice rotations need to obtain Program Director approval and affected Preceptor approval. Interns are allowed 1 day in which no make-up provision is required. Additional time lost in supervised practice will need to be made up. Refer to Policy 02.

**TITLE: Agency Policies**

**Policy: 13**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** Interns are expected to comply with all rules, regulations and policies of TAMU and of all affiliating institutions.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. The official statement of the rules and regulations that govern student conduct and student activities at TAMU is published in the current TAMU Graduate Catalog and TAMU Regulations (see <http://student-rules.tamu.edu>).
2. A copy of the intern policy and procedure manual is made available to each intern at the beginning of the program.
3. A copy of this intern policy manual has been provided to each Affiliating Institution.
4. It is the responsibility of the interns to become familiar with these documents and to comply with them in both graduate school and during the supervised practice.
5. It is recommended that affiliating institutions make interns aware of any affiliate policy or procedure that may apply to them during supervised practice.
6. Policies or procedure may change at any time during the program. Changes will be communicated to affected individuals.
7. Failure to comply with rules and regulations of TAMU or affiliating institutions may result in counseling or dismissal from the program. See Policies 08 and 10.

## **TITLE: Appearance and Attire**

**Policy: 14**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** Interns are to maintain a professional image at all times by being appropriately dressed and well-groomed.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. The intern is responsible for communicating with the preceptor either via email or telephone at least two weeks prior to the start of the rotation with that preceptor. In this communication, the intern should clarify the appropriate dress code for the facility, schedule, as well as other necessary information. Failure to comply with facility dress code policies may result in the intern's dismissal.
2. While at Central Texas Veterans' Healthcare Center (VA), interns will be issued the regulation lab coat, which is to be returned at the end of the program. Lab coats are to be worn over street clothes. During food service rotations at the VA interns are to wear the uniform issued to them and to wear closed-toe non-skid shoes (not canvas).
3. For clinical rotations other than the VA, interns may be required to wear a white lab coat over street clothes. Flat, hard soled, solid top shoes are to be worn during clinical rotations.
4. In general, interns are to comply with the following at all rotations, unless affiliations specify otherwise:
  - All clothes are to be neat, clean, and pressed
  - Dresses or skirts should be one inch above the knee or longer
  - Stockings must be worn with dresses and skirts
  - Sleeveless tops and low-cut tops are unacceptable
5. Interns are not to wear jeans, culottes, shorts, sweat pants or tops, spandex stirrup pants, Capri pants, skirts or dresses with slits more than 3 inches above the knee, shirts with logos, t-shirts, canvas shoes, sandals, backless shoes, open-toe shoes, or shoes with more than a 2-inch heel.
6. Interns are to wear the nametag issued by the Program Director. Some affiliating institutions require additional identification that they issue to the intern at the beginning of the supervised practice or rotation and that should be returned at the end of the rotation.
7. Hair restraints must be worn in kitchen areas.
8. Fingernails must be clean and neatly manicured. Nail polish and fake nails are not

allowed in food service rotations. Similar restrictions may apply with clinical rotations.

9. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum and be conservative in nature. In food service areas only stud earrings are allowed. Dangling earrings, necklaces, and bracelets are not allowed in food service areas for safety reasons. In food service areas, wedding bands are the only rings allowed.
10. Make-up and perfume in moderation only.

## **TITLE: Background Check, Drug Testing, and Immunizations**

**Policy: 15**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** Interns are required to complete a background check, drug testing, and tuberculosis testing prior to starting supervised practice. Proof of prior vaccinations must be provided to the Program Director.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Interns are required to have a background check through Texas A&M prior to starting the supervised practice. The intern will be required to submit appropriate documentation to initiate and complete this check. This will be done at no cost to the intern.
2. Interns completing a rotation at the VA are required to complete a background check via the VA system. Interns will be asked to submit appropriate documentation, identification, and fingerprints as determined by the VA system. This must be initiated no later than six weeks prior to their first rotation at the facility. This background check will be done at no cost to the intern.
3. Additional background checks may be requested by the facility depending on the population served (e.g. minors).
4. Interns are responsible for drug testing prior to the start of the supervised practice. A copy of the results of the drug testing must be submitted to the Program Director prior to the start of the supervised practice. Interns are responsible for the cost of this drug screen.
5. Interns must have a tuberculin skin test completed annually. Interns are responsible for this expense. If the intern has a positive skin test, they may be asked to complete further testing to determine if the disease is active or latent.
6. Proof of prior vaccinations, such as polio vaccination, rubella, mumps, and measles must be made available to the Program Director prior to the start of the internship program. A copy of proof of vaccinations may be made available to the preceptor if requested.
7. Supervised practice facilities may require additional vaccinations (e.g. flu vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine). Failure to maintain updated vaccination records as required by individual facilities may prevent the intern from being assigned a rotation or being dismissed from a facility. This may further prevent the intern from completing supervised practice experiences and successfully completing the Program.



## **TITLE: Facility and Preceptor Selection and Evaluation**

**Policy: 16**  
**Written: 7/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** Facilities with appropriate accreditation and licensure and that are able to provide unique experiences related to dietetics practice may become affiliated with the TAMU DI Program. Affiliated facilities must have preceptors that are qualified in their area of practice and include at least one preceptor that is able to serve as head preceptor. Both the facility and preceptor(s) will be evaluated periodically to ensure all remain qualified and are able to continue to provide dietetic experiences under preceptor supervision. Failure to do so may result in annulment of the affiliation agreement.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Facilities must be screened prior to selection as rotation site for the TAMU DI Program. Criteria for selection include:
  - a. The facility must provide practice experiences in an area related to dietetics practice.
  - b. The facility has a current accreditation or license as appropriate for the scope of their operation.
  - c. There is adequate staff to dedicate time to training the intern, including a designated head preceptor who is dedicated to the supervision of the intern.
  - d. An affiliation agreement can be agreed upon and signed by the appropriate parties at the practice facility and at TAMU.
2. Evaluation of the practice facility will be completed periodically and more extensively every five years. Annual evaluations of the facility will be completed based on intern evaluations and the ability and willingness of the facility to continue to provide experiences related to dietetics practice. The facility will also be screened to ensure maintenance of appropriate accreditation or licensure. Affiliation agreements are renewed at least every five years. At this time, the facility will be evaluated based on these same criteria and by ensuring an affiliation agreement may be renewed with the facility and TAMU.
3. Preceptors associated with affiliated facilities must be screened to ensure the preceptor is qualified in their area of practice to train interns. The preceptor should be knowledgeable of the TAMU DI Program mission, goals and objectives and the preceptor role and expectations prior to working with interns. Preceptor selection and education process is described below.
  - a. The preceptor must have adequate education and current license or certification as required for their area of practice.
  - b. The preceptor must have adequate experience in their area of practice to work autonomously.

- c. Preceptors must work at a facility or organization that is affiliated with the TAMU DI Program.
  - d. A phone or in-person interview by the Program Director with the head preceptor should occur prior to working with the intern. During this interview, the Program Director will discuss the Program's goals and objectives, practice competencies, and the rotation schedule and length, learning objectives and expected activities.
  - e. The preceptor will be provided a copy of the DI Program Policies and Procedures.
  - f. All preceptors are encouraged to complete the Preceptor Training module found on the ACEND Website, [Dietetics Preceptor Training Program](#).
  - g. Preceptors will also be asked to complete training on diversity, inclusivity, cultural humility and recognizing implicit bias. Training modules may be located on the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ACEND Resources Website](#).
  - h. Preceptors will undergo periodic review to ensure the preceptor is maintaining any required continuing education, training, certification, or credentials.
4. Preceptors will be informed that interns complete evaluations of the preceptor and that a summary of this information (without the intern identification) may be provided to the preceptor upon request.
  5. Intern complaints against preceptors should be submitted verbally and in writing to the Program Director. The Program Director will work with the preceptor's direct supervisor or, in the case that the preceptor has no director supervisor, with the preceptor to discuss the complaint and develop any necessary remedial steps to correct the problem.

## TITLE: COVID-19

**Policy: 17**  
**Written: 8/20**  
**Revised: 7/22**

**POLICY:** During times of a pandemic, such as COVID-19, it is imperative to implement best practices that protect the dietetic intern, preceptors, clients/patients, faculty, and staff associated with the TAMU MCN DI Program. The TAMU DI Program and interns are required to follow policies and protocols instituted by Texas A&M related to the pandemic, as well as additional restrictions and requirements, to ensure the safety for all associated with the TAMU DI Program.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. The TAMU DI Program must follow the policies and protocols of Texas A&M University and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences related to COVID-19 (or other pandemic). The Program Director is responsible for ensuring interns are made aware of these policies/procedures and associated changes. It should be noted that TAMU guidance is continually changing based on CDC guidance, and the Program Director will make those changes available to students.
2. Interns are also required to follow policies and procedures of the facility they are assigned to as part of the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program, particularly if the policies or procedures supersede Texas A&M guidelines. It is the intern's responsibility to inquire or seek out this information from their rotation preceptor or supervisor.
3. Interns are responsible for notifying the Program Director if they have come in contact with another individual at risk for COVID-19 (or other infectious condition), are experiencing symptoms of the condition, or have been diagnosed with the condition. The TAMU DI Program must following all Texas A&M protocols for reporting, tracking, and monitoring of the intern.
4. Interns may be asked to complete training activities related to COVID-19 (or other pandemic). The Program Director is responsible for delivering training materials to the interns and tracking the completion of the assigned training. Failure to complete any required training may result in preventing the intern from working in a supervised practice setting until the training is finalized.
5. Interns are required to notify the Program Director of any travel not related to the supervised practice during the scheduled dietetic internship. Interns must follow Texas A&M and/or facility policy following domestic and international travel.
6. Interns may be required to take extended time to complete the supervised practice

rotations or alternate supervised practice activities due to required self-isolation or extended illness. This may be necessary to ensure interns complete all required ACEND competencies and to meet the required 1000 hours to receive a verification statement.

7. Interns are encouraged to practice appropriate personal hygiene and lifestyle practices to reduce risk of infection at all times, but particularly during a pandemic. Resources for safe practices are available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) and Texas A&M University (<https://www.tamu.edu/>) websites. It is the intern's responsibility to be made aware of and implement these recommendations for the protection of themselves, preceptors, potential clients/patients, and other staff or faculty associated with the TAMU DI Program and Texas A&M.
8. While all efforts will be made to ensure interns receive the best supervised practice experience for completion of the TAMU DI Program, catastrophic events and pandemics may alter the supervised practice schedule. The Program Director is responsible for providing alternate supervised practice activities (as defined by ACEND) to assist in gaining knowledge and skills to address ACEND competencies for DI programs and to prepare the intern for dietetic practice.

## TITLE: Equitable Treatment

**Policy 18**  
**Written: 7/22**  
**Revised: N/A**

**POLICY:** Texas A&M University, the Department of Nutrition, and the Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program (TAMU DI) comply with all federal, state, or local laws and University policies for the equitable treatment of program faculty, staff, preceptors, and interns. The TAMU DI provides equal opportunity and treatment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, religion, size, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. The Texas A&M Dietetic Internship Program will comply with the policies and procedures in place by [Texas A&M University's Equal Opportunity Statement](#).
2. Interns are encouraged to report unfair or unequal treatment to the TAMU DI Program Director using the process outlined by the policy on reporting grievances (Policy 11). In the event that the complaint is against the Program Director, the intern may submit the complaint to the Department Head.
3. If the intern files a complaint of unfair or unequal treatment against a preceptor, the Program Director will discuss the matter with the preceptor or their direct supervisor for resolution of the matter.