



DIETETIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SUPPLEMENTAL INTERN HANDBOOK

All policies and procedures not detailed in this manual, are available online in the School of Health Professions [Catalog](https://portals.ccf.org/today/Catalog) , or the Cleveland Clinic Policy and Procedures Manual <https://portals.ccf.org/today/Policies>

Dietetic Internship Program Supplemental Handbook

Table of Contents

Center for Human Nutrition Overview	3
Dietetic Internship Program Overview	4
Program Completion	5
Post-completion Employment	6
Program Requirements	6
Feedback	6
Internship Records	6
Grievance Procedure	7
Email, Laptops, & Pagers	7
Fire Safety	7
Loan Deferment	8
Storage of Personal Items	8
Universal Precautions	8

Center for Human Nutrition Overview

The Dietetic Internship Program has been operating since 1988 and is managed and implemented primarily through the Cleveland Clinic main campus hospital. Interns will complete clinical rotations with the Center for Human Nutrition, which is located within the Digestive Disease Institute. The Center for Human Nutrition was developed in 2008 and the Medical Director is Donald Kirby, MD, FACP, FACN, FACG, AGAF, CNSC, CPNS. In 2010, Nutrition Support Team dietitian, Cindy Hamilton, MS, RD, LD, FAND, was appointed as Director, until she retired in April, 2022. Renee Welsh, MS, RD, LD, CNSC, filled the role of Senior Director, in 2022. The pediatric RD team moved to the Pediatric Institute/Children's Hospital and additional dietitians have been hired to practice in the Endocrinology Institute and in the newly combined Center for Functional Medicine and Wellness. Since 2015, the Center for Human Nutrition has grown to include dietitians at all our regional hospital facilities and most recently to include Florida locations.

Elizabeth Friedel began working alongside former Dietetic Internship Director, Naomi Barbor, in November 2021, as the Lead Registered Dietitian. In this role, she maintained clinical care responsibilities and served as an education and clinical coordinator for the Dietetic Internship. In August 2025, Elizabeth transitioned into the role of Internship Director. While she remains an active member of the CHN leadership team and Continuing Education committee, her role is now part of the School of Health Professions team.

The mission of the Center for Human Nutrition is to provide the highest quality nutrition care through leadership in clinical practice, education, and research.

CHN provides a vast array of learning opportunities. Because CC is a tertiary care center, the patient mix is very complex and challenging. Dietitians manage the nutritional care of patients with critical and chronic conditions. Since the physicians at CC specialize in a particular area of medicine or surgery, the dietitians are also able to become proficient in one or more specialty areas.

We continue to use, apply and develop best practice initiatives, including the Nutrition Care Process and Standardize Language (NCP/SL). Each staff member is responsible for documentation using this method and incorporating documentation based on NCP/SL for all patients deemed at nutrition risk. In 2012, CHN implemented new standards for the physical assessment of patients and the diagnosis of malnutrition and the degree of severity among patients. Dietitians work with physicians to bill for mild, moderate and severe malnutrition. CHN lead a national initiative to assess and diagnosis malnutrition by providing both didactic and hands-on training through the CC Simulation Center. All dietetic interns will complete hands-on and didactic malnutrition assessment and diagnosis training during orientation (online modules) and early fall (hands-on).

As a teaching aid for dietetic interns, the clinical staff develops and updates Learning Activity Packets (LAPs). The LAPs are designed to enhance the clinical rotation and to develop advanced skills in nutrition assessment and patient care. The LAP is completed in parts throughout the rotation and submitted to the preceptor for review. The preceptor and

intern discuss the LAP during the rotation. LAPs are developed for a variety of rotations and specific coverage areas.

Many dietitians within Center for Human Nutrition participate in clinical outcomes research and quality improvement projects. Interns are included in these QI/research projects. Interns complete a two- week rotation completing a portion of an outcomes research project or QI project. The intern selects the preceptor/project, assists with the ongoing project, draws conclusions from the available data, presents the project to CHN, with an opportunity to develop a research proposal. Some interns work on projects that result in publication, receiving acknowledgement or even authorship in manuscripts.

As part of our Dietetic Internship Program, interns are given the opportunity to choose three self-directed experiences focused on sales and marketing, community nutrition and advanced practice. Each rotation is two weeks in length. Interns can work with dietitian(s) outside of Cleveland Clinic and may choose to pursue an on-site or virtual opportunity in another city or state. The Program Director will assist in obtaining an affiliation agreement for external rotation sites. With the help of the Program Director, each intern is encouraged to pursue their area of interest, coordinate preceptor availability, and review/edit the curriculum evaluation form(s). The intern is responsible for all expenses and travel related to elective rotation(s). This experience has been very beneficial for interns who take advantage of the flexibility. Many interns have secured employment based on their initiative to pursue experiences in unique areas of nutrition and in geographic locations where they would like to live and work.

Dietetic Internship Program Overview

To maximize opportunities for learning during the internship, the rotations and curriculum have been structured to allow each intern to progress in level of difficulty and responsibility. Recently, the program adapted the 2022 competencies set forth by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). The competencies identified ensure the learning process becomes increasingly more challenging and less prescriptive as the intern progresses.

The program currently accepts up to 10 interns. The program has been divided into seven main categories: orientation (2 weeks), clinical (22 weeks), foodservice (4 weeks), research (2 weeks), community/public health (2 weeks), sales/marketing (2 weeks), and advanced practice (2 weeks). The clinical category is divided into eight rotations, to ensure a timely progression of competence and ample opportunity for evaluation of performance. The following is a diagram of how a normal year in the dietetic internship program will progress.

1. Orientation (2 weeks) in August

2 Rotation Tracks:



September to March

1. 5 interns: Food Service Management- Patient and Retail with Aramark at Regional Facilities or Morrison at Main Campus – 4 weeks; followed by clinical work
2. 5 interns: Begin clinical work and complete patient food service following clinical rotations (Feb-Mar)

Clinical Rotations:

September to March

1 week with Dietetic Technician, Registered
6 weeks: Inpatient Nursing Floors 1& 2 – virtual case studies
3 weeks: Outpatient Nutrition – virtual case study
3 weeks: Intensive Care Units – virtual case study
3 weeks: TPN with Nutrition Support Team or CGRT – virtual case study
3 weeks: Pediatrics (inpatient/outpatient/rehab)
2 weeks: Research or QI

Several class days are planned for the fall; typically one day each in September and October and two the week of Thanksgiving. Spring class week is usually in March, before electives begin, graduation class week is early June.

Spring Electives: April-May (10 weeks)

2 weeks: Sales and Marketing (intern choice)
2 weeks: Community/Public Health (intern choice)
2 weeks: Advanced Practice (intern choice)
2 weeks: Staff Relief (intern preference from any previous rotation except TPN); must display good performance in previous rotations with pre-approval from known preceptor).
1 week: Clinical Nutrition Management (intern preference)

Rotation Sites

Main campus is the primary location for clinical rotations. However, some clinical rotations and foodservice rotations will take place at CC regional hospitals and family health centers. Prior to an intern being placed at a clinical site, the Program Director evaluates the site to ensure it is capable of providing a positive and safe learning environment. The evaluation also includes ensuring the location of the site is within 50 miles of the main program location. For elective rotations, an intern may pursue an external rotation site that exceeds 50 miles from the main program location by self-selection only, contingent on site availability and program approval.

Program Completion

Upon successful completion of all requirements set forth by ACEND and the Cleveland Clinic Dietetic Internship Program, the intern will receive a verification statement, a certificate of completion, and, along with confirmation of conferred graduate degree, will be eligible to sit for the national Registered Dietitian Nutritionist exam. The Program Completion Objective (Standard 2) stating that 80% of interns complete the program within 150% of program length is ideal. For our 10-month program, that is 15 months. However, there may be instances when interns are unable to complete all requirements within this time frame. Interns may also require more time to complete a concurrent graduate degree program now required for RDN exam eligibility. The maximum time to complete the program is no longer than five years. All enrolled interns in good standing should complete

all program requirements, including confirmation of graduate degree, and be eligible to take the credentialing exam within five years.

Post-completion Employment

Interns enrolled in the Dietetic Internship Program are not guaranteed a position at a Cleveland Clinic facility following completion of the internship program. Graduated interns with a record of good performance will be given preferential consideration for open positions; however, this does not guarantee that the intern will be hired. All interns must pass the registration exam before they can be considered for an opportunity at Cleveland Clinic.

Program Requirements

The DI program is comprised of 1,344 scheduled rotation hours, and ~150 scheduled class hours spread across approximately 20 non-rotation days. For class days, the cohort will come together as a group. You will generally work 1:1 and side-by-side with your preceptor during the 14 scheduled rotations. Completed evaluations and assignments are submitted in the electronic learning system. The master schedule and evaluations are tracked to confirm required competencies. Interns receive a transcript, including rotation scores and accumulated supervised practice hours at program completion.

It is your responsibility to contact your preceptor prior to each rotation, provide an evaluation form for the preceptor, and have read the curriculum/required readings, benchmarks and rotation objectives in advance. Some preceptors will provide a learning activity packet (LAP). At the beginning of each rotation, your instructor will review the objectives of the learning experience.

Interns will be able to select rotation preferences for specialty areas, which will be coordinated by program faculty as available. Prior learning from other programs, work experiences or activities will not count towards Cleveland Clinic dietetic internship program hours, assignments and/or required competencies.

Feedback

As interns, you will be learning and practicing many new skills. To grow in confidence and in your abilities, you will receive frequent feedback from your preceptors and from the Director. Before performing duties and responsibilities on your own, you will receive the proper training from your preceptor. During each rotation, you will receive informal feedback from your preceptor regularly, and formal feedback at the end of every rotation week. At the conclusion of each rotation, a written evaluation of your performance will be discussed with you, and your feedback will be solicited. These evaluations will become a part of your internship file and will determine your successful completion of the program.

Internship Records

Your file is located in the School's student information system, Campus Cafe. The files contain: intern application from DICAS; transcripts and verification statement from the college/university in which didactic coursework was completed; vaccination records; emergency contact information and local address/phone number; proof of Academy membership; signed statement that student handbook has been reviewed; signed and approved personal day forms; and documentation related to disciplinary action or leave of absence (as needed). The permanent file will contain the intern's certificate of completion and final transcript from SOHP's DI program, and a verification statement from the DI program.

If at any time you would like to review your file, the Program Director will assist you.

Grievance Procedure

Complaints related to ACEND-defined Dietetic Internship program standards that have not been resolved using the School of Health Professions Grievance Procedure may be directed to The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) after all other options have been exhausted. ACEND contact info: phone- 312-899-0040 (ext 5400), email- acend@eatright.org or website- www.eatrightpro.org/acend

Email, Laptops, & Pagers

It is important that you check your email daily. Email is the primary communication used. You will also be provided with a pager, and laptop, with access for remote login to the patient records and internal resources available. Any interdepartmental mail should include the person's name, department, and mail code in order to be processed. The mail code for the Internship Office is **M17**. Mail codes for all CC departments can be found in the CC Intranet Directory. Access to email is provided for your internal and professional use. Personal communications via email are discouraged. Any professional correspondence sent to you at CC must include:

Your Name
Center for Human Nutrition, M17
The Cleveland Clinic
9500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44195

Personal mail and packages must be directed to your Cleveland area residence.

Fire Safety

When there is a **fire at CC main campus, an alarm (in A building) or chimes (in all other locations) will sound**. Check the nearest zone map to determine the location of the fire.

When there is a fire in your building:

- 1) Close all windows and hallway doors.
- 2) End all telephone conversations.
- 3) Notify Security if you see smoke in your work area (x42222).
- 4) Turn off lights and other equipment.
- 5) Be prepared to leave the area, if necessary.

In the dire event of a mass shooting, interns and employees are required to follow the Run, Hide, Fight model, which is part of our onboarding training and will also be reviewed by CC Police during orientation.

For additional safety information, refer to the [SOHP Emergency Preparedness Plan](#).

Loan Deferment

Dietetic interns may be eligible for deferment of student loans while enrolled in our program. Interns apply for loan deferment by using the CC Internship U.S. Department of Education program number: 03068700. The Internship Director will also provide a letter as back-up proof for deferment and will sign any necessary documents.

Storage of Personal Items

Each intern will have use of a lockable storage shelf and a desk in the interns' office area. Boots and umbrellas should be kept under the desk. CC is not responsible for valuables that are lost or stolen, so please do not bring valuables to work. Locked shelves are CC property and management may periodically inspect storage locations.

The intern office is located in a relatively low traffic area of the Clinic; however, we have a door to the outside next to our office that may be used by the public. For this reason, please keep your valuables locked up or keep them at home. If you are the last person out at the end of the day, please lock the door and turn off the lights. Do not keep valuables here overnight, as food service employees and environmental service personnel frequent our areas during off hours.

Universal Precautions

Students are provided educational courses designed to inform them that there is the potential for hospital acquired infections as a result of exposure in the department. Many patients are of an undiagnosed nature when diagnostic work-ups are performed. All patients should be considered potentially infectious and therefore require that Standard Precautions be followed. Hand washing between patient contacts is essential in preventing the transmission of infection. Personnel and students must have a basic knowledge of how diseases are spread and the precautions that must be taken in order to contain them. In this way, imaging services can be provided around the clock without compromise to the

patient and with a minimum risk for all. Students should observe all policies as outlined in the Infection Control Manual of each of the clinical sites as made available during orientation to each site. These policies demonstrate concern for patients and coworkers and affords the student prompt medical attention should the need arise.

Hand washing between patient contacts is essential. The hospital's hand washing policy must be followed. Students are to observe the prescribed dress code for the clinicals and the operating room. Eating and drinking are prohibited in all areas other than specified designated areas. When isolation procedures are necessary, portable equipment will be used in the patient's room when possible. Students are to be thoroughly familiar with the hospital's isolation policies. When certain procedures are essential to the patient's care, we have an obligation to perform those services. These patients are entitled to the same high quality care that we administer to other patients.

THE END!

Please ask about any questions you have,
or topics you did not see covered in this
manual.

Additional details on DI policies and [CC policies](#) not covered
here are provided to reference.