

Frequently asked questions

1. What are the steps to become an RD/RDN?

- Complete a bachelor's degree and DPD course work to earn a verification statement (DPD completion statement)
- Complete a supervised practice program (internship) and a graduate degree (2024 requirement)
- Pass the RD exam
- If applicable, obtain state licensure or certification (CT requires certification to practice in a clinical setting)

2. What is the difference between the DPD and CP dietetic programs at the University of Connecticut?

The didactic program in dietetics includes all the necessary course work to earn a verification statement, which is required for starting a supervised practice program also called a dietetic internship. The coordinated dietetics program in the department of Allied Health Sciences includes all the necessary course work as well as the supervised practice hours and results in a degree in dietetics. The DPD has the advantage of being more flexible with course work and you can choose where you complete your internship, the CP has the advantage of 4 vs. 5 years to become eligible to sit for the registration exam and you do not have to apply for a separate competitive internship.

3. Is one program better than the other? How do I choose between CP and DPD?

Both programs are accredited by ACEND and result in the same outcome, passing the RD exam. Both programs have high pass rates and job placement. Students that choose the DPD prefer to not take 2 science courses in the same semester early in their undergraduate career, and want the flexibility of completing a minor, second major, second degree, study abroad or course work in other areas or prefer to do an internship outside the University, possibly in another state. Students who choose the CP prefer the accelerated nature of the program (completion in 4 years) and like not having to worry about the internship application process. The CP does require you to formally apply (Feb 1st deadline prior to the junior year) and has required prerequisite courses. The DPD does not have formal application into the program, however there is an optional DPD concentration you may declare. The concentration is not required to earn a verification statement. It allows you to see program requirements in Peoplesoft.

4. Can I complete the DPD course work in the graduate NUSC program?

The DPD is an undergraduate program, which is separate from the graduate program requirements. Students who only need a few DPD courses are usually able to complete these courses alongside their graduate requirements. Some of the graduate courses/requirements may be used to fulfil DPD requirements (courses must be approved by the DPD director). Your graduate advisor would have to approve completing undergraduate courses

simultaneously with all other graduate degree requirements including graduate assistant responsibilities.

5. I already have a bachelor's degree, do I have to earn a second degree to earn my verification statement?

Only one degree in any subject is technically required to earn a verification statement. The DPD course work can be completed non-degree, however, most students choose to pursue a second bachelor's degree because there are usually no additional required credits, you have an earlier course pick time, and are eligible for financial aid and scholarships.

6. I have a nutrition degree from another country. How do I become an RD in the US?

The first step is to pay to have your degree assessed for US equivalency. If you completed nutrition/dietetic courses, the DPD director will need copies of all nutrition/dietetic syllabi. The DPD director will assess your course work to determine which courses you still need to complete to earn a verification statement. At least 20 credits must be completed through the University of Connecticut to earn a verification statement. Once you earn a verification statement, you can apply for a dietetic internship/graduate program and then sit for the registration exam.

7. How do I make myself competitive for a dietetic internship?

Internships will rank students based on cumulative GPA, science GPA, DPD GPA, working and volunteer experiences and leadership. It is recommended to have at least 1 year of dietary aide or similar work experience before applying, as well as 20-30 hours of volunteer experiences. Most internships require at least a 3.0 cumulative and DPD GPA, and many also require a 3.0 science GPA. Please refer to each dietetic internship website for program application requirements.

8. When should I apply for a dietetic internship?

All students in the DPD have the goal of applying for and being accepted into an internship program. Whether you should apply after graduation or 1-2 years later depends on many factors. To make themselves more competitive, students may decide to work as a diet technician or nutritionist before applying. Students also may work to save money for the internship. If the programs they are interested in are very competitive, students may retake courses to improve their GPA, pass the Dietetic Technician Registration Exam, or pursue a graduate degree before applying to an internship. It is not recommended to apply to just see how competitive you are. It is important to discuss with the DPD director when application should occur and how to best prepare for the application process. Generally about 25-50% of student apply in their graduation year, while 50-75% of students wait 1 or more years. If you do take time off before applying, you need to be sure you are working in the field of dietetics, and are continuing with volunteer experiences.

9. What should I do in high school to prepare for a career in dietetics?

Course work for the DPD and CP includes chemistry, biology, anatomy and physiology, organic chemistry, microbiology and biochemistry. It is recommended to take honors or AP chemistry and biology in high school and work as a dietary aide or food service worker.